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ABSTRACT

This book reports on a collaborative research project to evaluate the conditions in Porta Farm, an informal settlement in Zimbabwe. Of particular interest to researchers was determining how children felt about their status, what they faced in their daily lives, where they came from, as well as what their future aspirations were and what interventions could be attempted to assist. The first chapter of the book provides an executive summary. Chapter 2 presents a background to the issues surrounding informal urban settlements in Zimbabwe, and explores some of the factors behind their expansion in the country. Chapter 3 contains a more detailed history of the research project itself, how it was done, what difficulties were encountered, the lessons learned, and the benefits that children derived from their participation. Chapter 4 details the research findings, and presents through drawings, quotes, interviews, and case studies the main issues faced by children raised in these communities. Main findings are presented under the following headings: issues of identity, the living environment, education, health, economic situation, vulnerability, and gender issues. The final chapter summarizes recommendations arising from the research. The book's several appendices provide more detail on research methodologies, current projects in Porta Farm and Dzivarasekwa, a list of other reading materials, and a glossary of terms. (SD)

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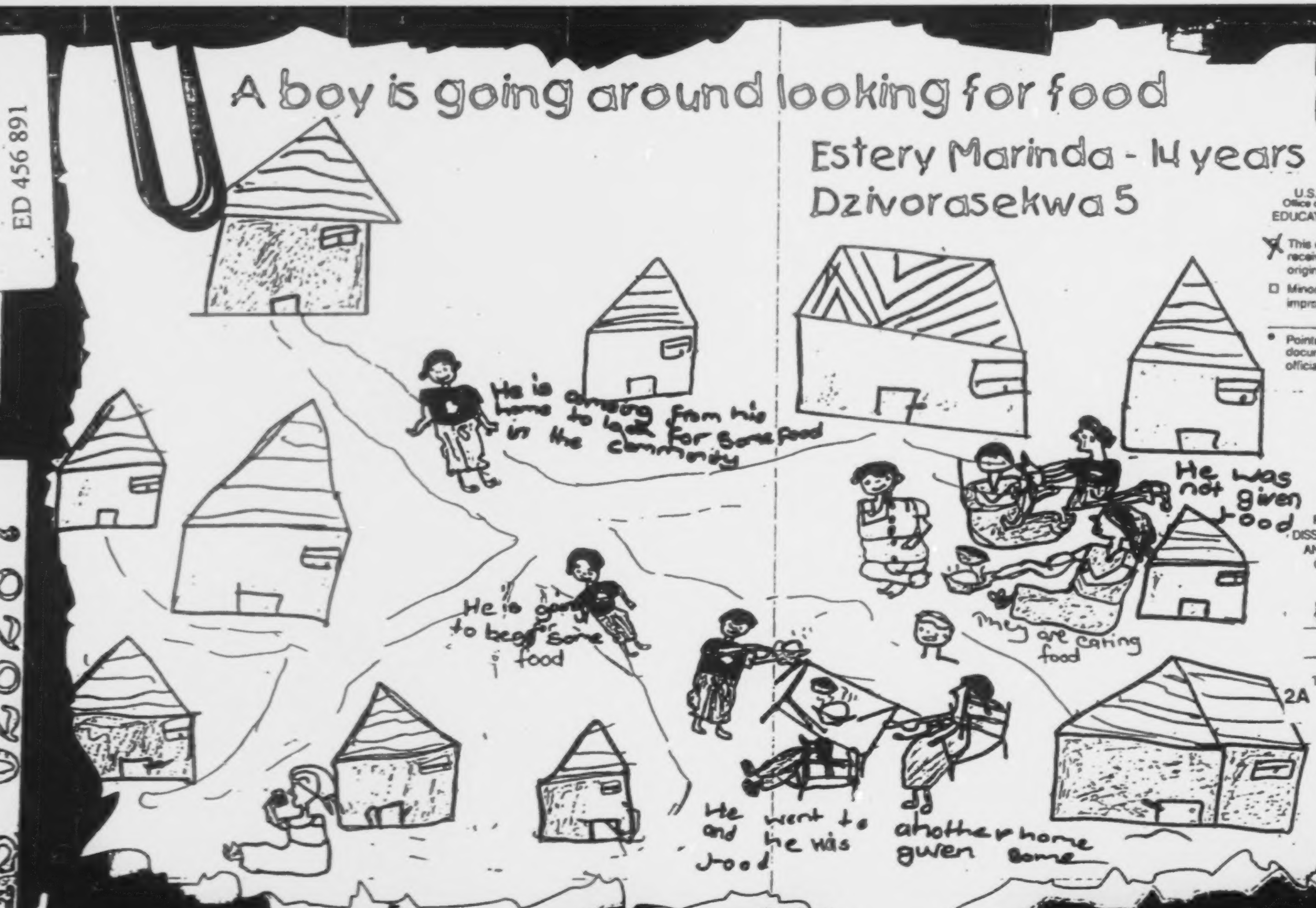
A boy is going around looking for food
Estery Marinda - 14 years
Dzivorasekwa 5
He is coming from his home to look for some food in the community
He is going to beg some food
He was not given food
They are eating food
He went to another home and he was given some food

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# “Do not look down on us”

## Children's Voices from Informal Settlements in Zimbabwe

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# "Do not look down on us"

## CHILDREN'S VOICES FROM INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS IN ZIMBABWE

"Do not look down on us, just because we live at Porta Farm.
We can do a lot, just like you can.
We think just like you, and one day we will be successful like you"

(A statement from a group of children in Porta Farm, Zimbabwe.)

This publication was written and edited by Mary Chinyenze-Daniel, and Chris McIvor of Save The Children Fund (UK) (SCF) and Astrid Honeyman of Inter-Country People's Aid. It is based on the research carried out by children in Porta Farm and Dzivarasekwa Extension, under the supervision of Moffat Mutale and Kias Matutu, project officers with SCF. The Youth Researchers were:

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- Thomas Chiguba
- Andrew Nevanji
- Kudzananai Zvenhiwa
- Dennis Dishon
- Mellisah Phiri
- Catherine Maruta
- Elizabeth Mula
- Makanyara Sumbureru
- Linda Round
- Loice Nyuke
- Chipo Dembure
- Amina Handson
- Mucharevei Kulinji

**From Dzivarasekwa Extension:**

- Farai Mukucha
- Phillion Mukucha
- Tangenhamo Chinhoza
- Bolim Magare
- Elisha Mwenda
- Chipo Mafuta
- Melody Dzimati
- Chiedza Chinhoza
- Vine Mapiya
- Abigail Matashara

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Murehwa
Grandmother
Grandfather

Save the Children

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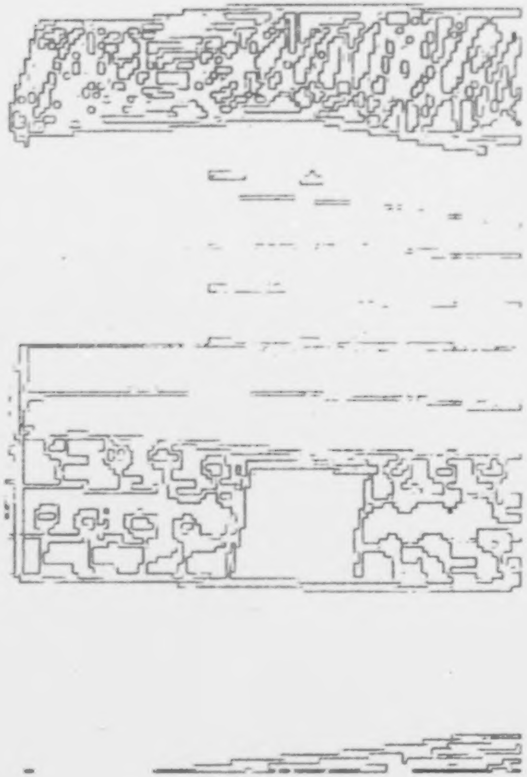


# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Save The Children Fund (UK) would like to thank several people and organizations who contributed to the development of this research and the publication of this report. In particular the children of Porta Farm and Dzivarasekwa Extension require a special mention for the time, energy and talents they contributed to the project. Inter-Country People's Aid (IPA) also provided valuable technical and logistic support for the realization of the project.

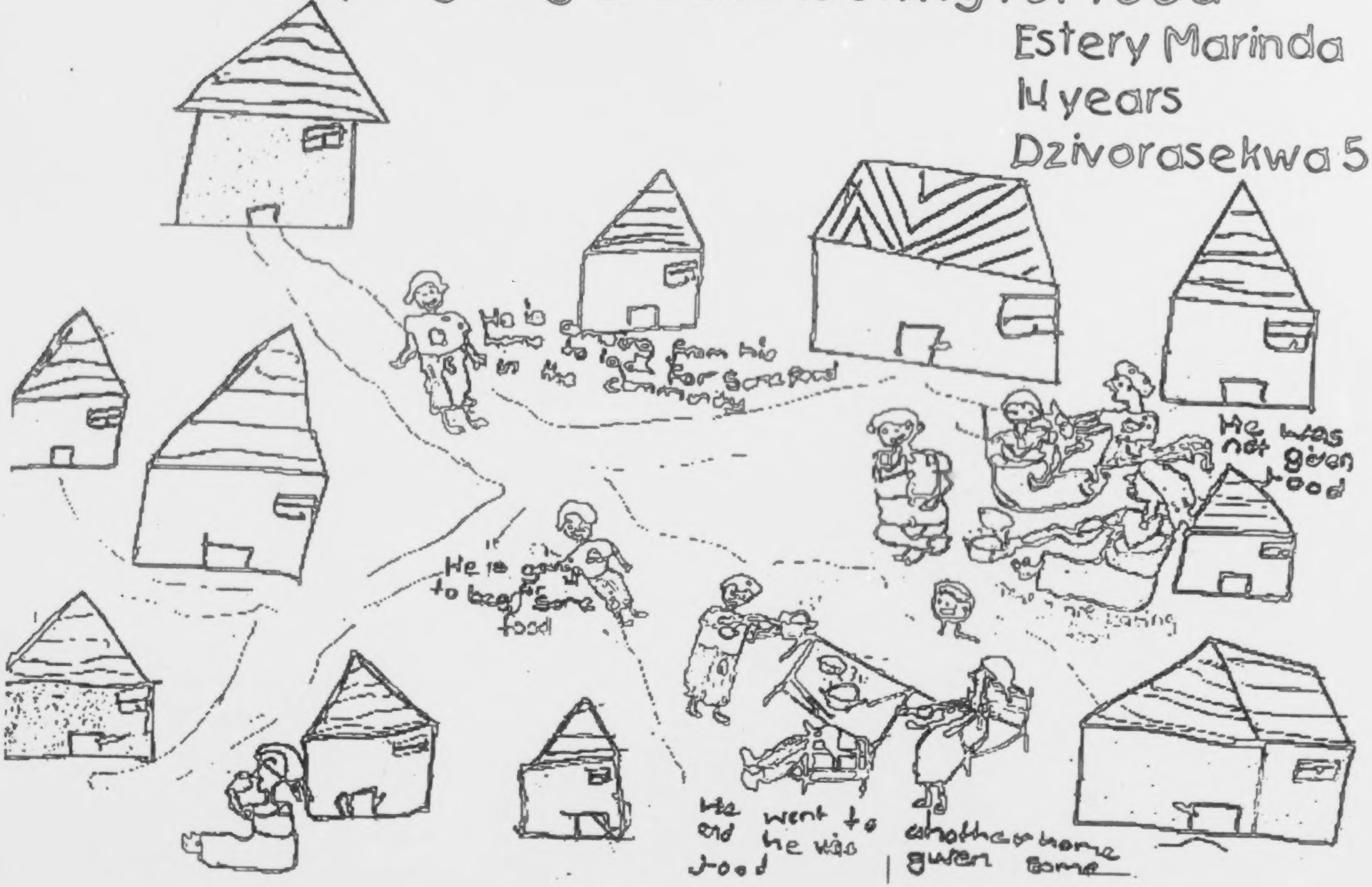
We would also like to thank Mr E. Msipa, the Headmaster of Porta Farm Primary School and Mrs C. Muchona the Headmistress of Dzivarasekwa Extension Primary School for their assistance in facilitating our contacts with children. In addition, Mr S. Mawanza of Zimrights and Mrs N. Chatamba and Mr T. Muchuri in Dzivarasekwa also assisted the project in our initial contacts with the youth researchers.

Ms. T. Mumba also carried out an assignment for SCF to conduct individual and group interviews with children. These interviews appear in different parts of the report. A research project initiated by Catherine Weiser, a Hart Fellow attached to IPA and first presented at the 1998 International Book Fair, Harare, also contributed many ideas and suggestions to the initial development of the project.

Within Porta Farm and Dzivarasekwa Extension, we would also like to thank Mr E. Ngulube and Mr S. Tondoori of the Development Committee, who facilitated the project's acceptance by the community. Support was also received from Mrs C. Manyau, Mr C. Chikanya and Mrs. D. Auret of the SCF Child Rights Unit throughout the course of the project. For administrative, secretarial and logistic support special thanks to Dorothy Rufaro Chinosiyani, SCF (UK) and Biggie Pabwe, Inter-Country People's Aid. Thanks also to Mrs N. Dhlembeue for her comments on the manuscript.

# A boy is going around looking for food

Estery Marinda
14 years
Dzivorasekwa 5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# CHAPTER 1

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The word "squatter" generally conjures up an image of large numbers of people living in poor and squalid conditions on the margins of urban areas. The term is associated with illegality, the fact that people who should be living elsewhere have occupied land that does not belong to them. Like all labels, the term serves to conveniently categorize a section of the population we would rather forget or ignore. One of the main grievances raised by children living in such settlements is the name used to describe them.

> *"People like to call others names, to label them. A squatter is a person who lives in a prohibited place. So why should I be labelled a squatter when I am a boy and have a name? The Government brought us here and we do not live in a prohibited place. So why do they call us squatters?"*

What lies behind this label? What do people in these settlements face in their daily lives? Where do they come from? What are their hopes and aspirations for the future? It was partly in order to explore these issues that Save The Children UK (SCF), in collaboration with Inter Country People's Aid (IPA), carried out a situation analysis of the conditions in Porta Farm, an informal settlement some 35km west of Harare. What was of particular importance was to find out the situation of children, in order to identify possible interventions that could assist the most vulnerable groups within these communities. At the same time, as an organization particularly committed to realizing the rights of children, SCF was interested in establishing to what extent the principles of the UN Convention On The Rights Of The Child (CRC) (see glossary) were either being honoured or violated in these communities. Zimbabwe signed the Convention in 1990.

Yet it became clear in the course of this research that several children were unhappy about the way in which the investigation was being conducted. It did not give them enough time to describe and explain their lives to a public they felt should know more about them. This approach was a direct infringement of a major section of the convention, which states that children should be properly consulted on matters which affect them. It was this observation that prompted SCF and IPA to develop a more detailed research programme and one that was more participative and empowering for the children. This led to a decision that the primary researchers would be the young people and that the role of the adult co-ordinators of the project would be to support and facilitate the process of investigation, rather than carry it out themselves.

## Children In Research

From July to December 1998, a team of 25 young researchers – between the ages of 12 and 15 – from two settlements in Porta Farm and Dzivarasekwa Extension, carried out an extensive programme of research with their peers. The research had several objectives. The first was to yield information that could be used to design interventions that would more adequately target the real and expressed needs of children and young people in such locations.

Part of the rationale for this kind of investigation arises from the perception of people in many communities that aid projects often fail to address their real problems. Designed by outsiders and external consultants, many projects are never owned by the people they are supposed to benefit. Once the donor withdraws, these projects, more often than not, collapse. In the case of programmes with children, their omission from a process of prior consultation is doubly evident. This reflects a common belief that adults alone are able to identify what is in their best interests.

Yet many children in Zimbabwe, especially those in more marginalized urban and rural areas, are given responsibility for a whole range of activities within their communities. In Porta Farm and Dzivarasekwa Extension, for example, children indicated that they are often responsible for water and fuelwood collection, agricultural work, family income-generating activities, disposal of garbage, child rearing, domestic chores and housing construction. No matter whether we think these responsibilities are appropriate or not, the fact is that they are part of children's lives in many parts of the world. If we wish to assist them, therefore, it makes no sense to exclude them from discussions as to how best this might be done. The research carried out by children in the above communities exposed a range of issues facing them that the adult co-ordinators had never thought about.

## The Benefits Of Participation

The decision to involve children as researchers was important for another reason, apart from the qualitative information it was expected to generate. When the decision was communicated to the schools through which many of the researchers were identified, there was considerable enthusiasm and interest expressed by the children. In the end, and despite the constraints on their spare time, more children wanted to be involved than the project could handle. Many claimed that this was the first time that anyone had shown any willingness to listen to their opinions.

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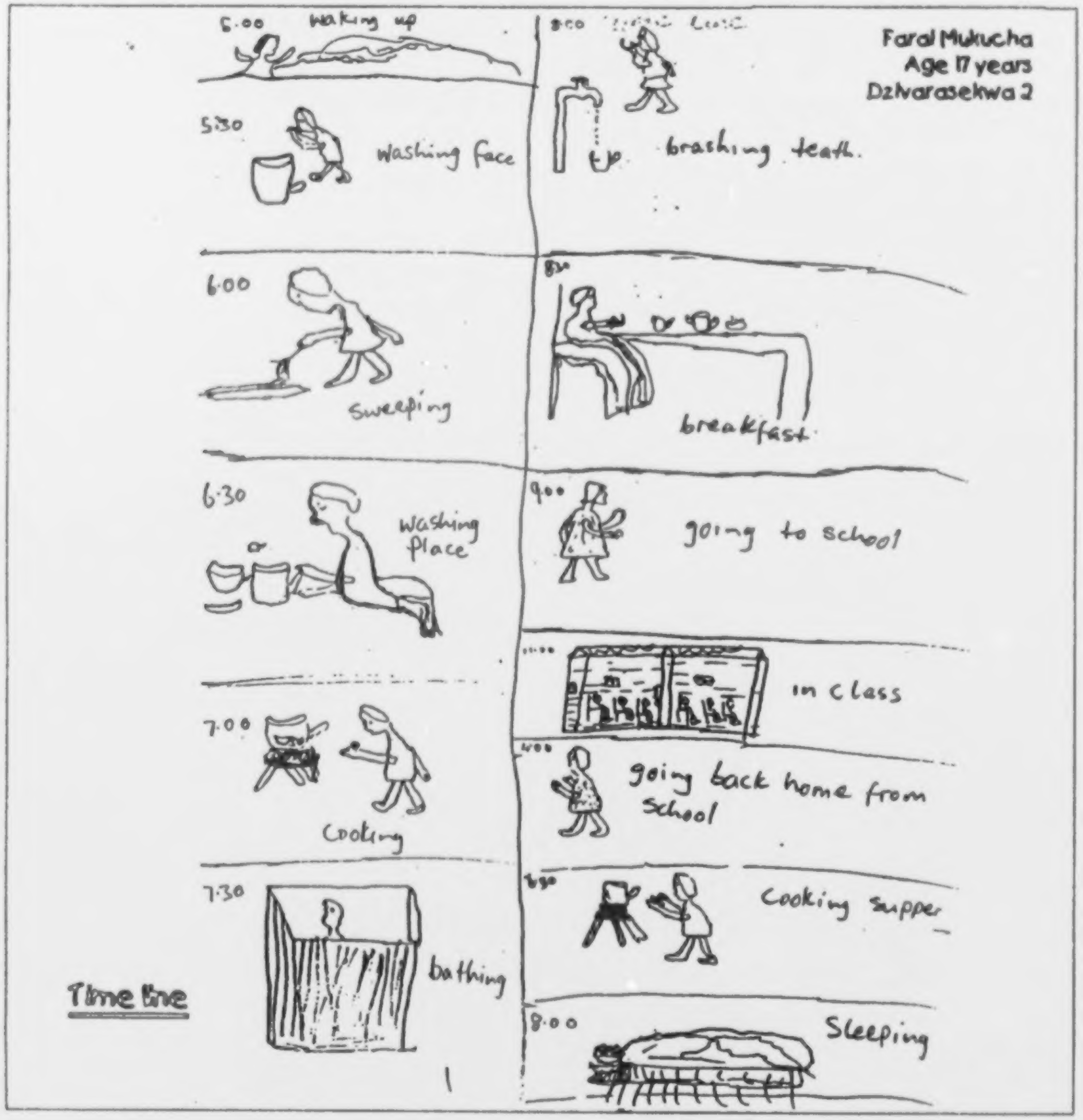
Faral Mukucha
Age 17 years
Dzivarasekwa 2
5.00 waking up
5:30 washing face
6.00 sweeping
6:30 washing place
7.00 cooking
7:30 bathing
8.00
brushing teeth.
8:30 breakfast
9.00 going to school
in class
4.00 going back home from School
5:30 Cooking supper
8.00 Sleeping
Time line

According to the children, the research process itself became an empowering experience for them. It allowed them to develop a range of skills in writing, drawing, communication and listening. But more importantly it led to a growth of confidence and self-esteem that several parents and teachers commented upon. In a country where child rights has sometimes been seen as an invitation to irresponsible and unruly behaviour, the growth in responsibility and self-confidence that can come about through the participation of children in projects is invaluable in challenging sceptical parental attitudes. Claimed one of the researchers from Porta Farm,

> *"I learned about the research process and about the ways in which research is conducted. We moved around Porta Farm with a questionnaire and asked people to respond to each question. Although some people were difficult at first, once they found out about the project they responded very well. This was an enriching experience for me, which made me realize that there is a lot that I as an individual can do."*

## Contents

The publication consists of four sections. The first presents a general background to the

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issues surrounding informal urban settlements in Zimbabwe, and explores some of the factors behind their expansion in the country.

The second section presents a more detailed history of the research project itself, how it was done, what difficulties were encountered, the lessons learnt and the benefits that children derived from their participation.

The third section contains the research findings, and presents through drawings, quotes, interviews and case studies the main issues that children raised in these communities. The research methods were designed to explore the perceptions and experiences of children. Consequently very little quantitative data was collected. This was not an oversight on the part of the project. Quantitative studies, with statistics on health, education enrolment levels, numbers of orphaned children etc are available in other reports which are listed in the bibliography. The main findings are presented under the following headings: Issues of Identity, The Living Environment, Education, Health, Economic Situation, Vulnerability and Gender Issues. It concludes with a section on children's hopes and aspirations for the future.

The final section presents a summary of recommendations arising from the research. Although this is largely drawn from the children's own recommendations, it also represents the organizational position of SCF and IPA on where we would like to see changes to improve the lives of children in these communities.

Finally there are several appendices which provide more detail on research methodologies, current projects in Porta Farm and Dzivarasekwa, a list of other reading materials and a glossary of terms.

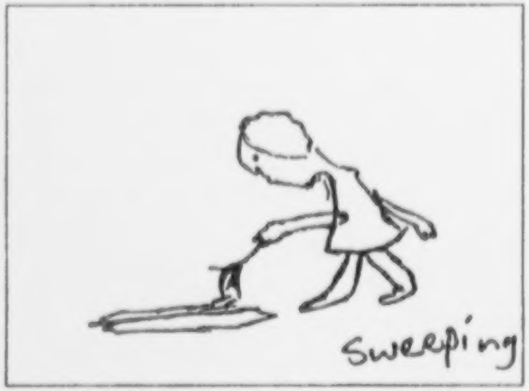
## Altering Opinions

This publication is aimed at a variety of audiences, both within and outside Zimbabwe. For NGOs and government institutions specifically involved with improving conditions in informal settlements, we hope that the publication will offer some valuable insights and ideas on how to better target support. For organizations specifically involved with children and the realization of child rights, we hope that the information on methodologies and the history of the project will offer some guidelines as to how such research can be replicated elsewhere.

But over and above the more specialized audiences, such as the ones above, we also believe that the publication will be of interest to a wider reading public, who wish to find out about the lives of children in communities which are often hidden from view and public attention. We hope that this will help to reverse many of the stereotypes that make up popular opinion about residents from these settlements. This in turn should create a more enabling environment for children from these communities, within which their rights can be fully realized.

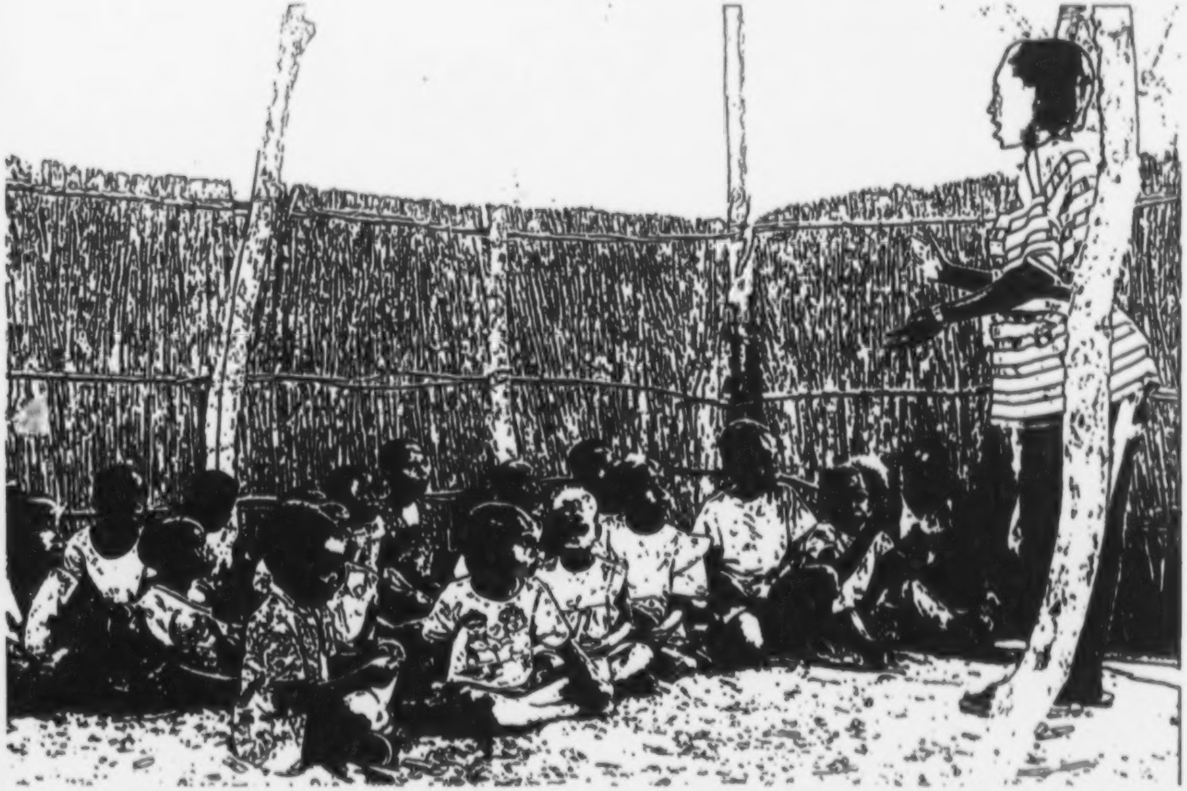
As one group of children from Porta Farm remind us,

> *"Do not look down on us just because we live at Porta Farm. We can do a lot like you can. We think just like you, and one day we will be successful like you."*



# CHAPTER 2

## AN INSIGHT INTO INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS IN ZIMBABWE



Poverty experienced by Zimbabweans living in rural areas has been a focus for development agencies and government over the last 20 years. The urban poor have been largely ignored, and yet, according to one report, the problem of urban poverty and homelessness is rising:

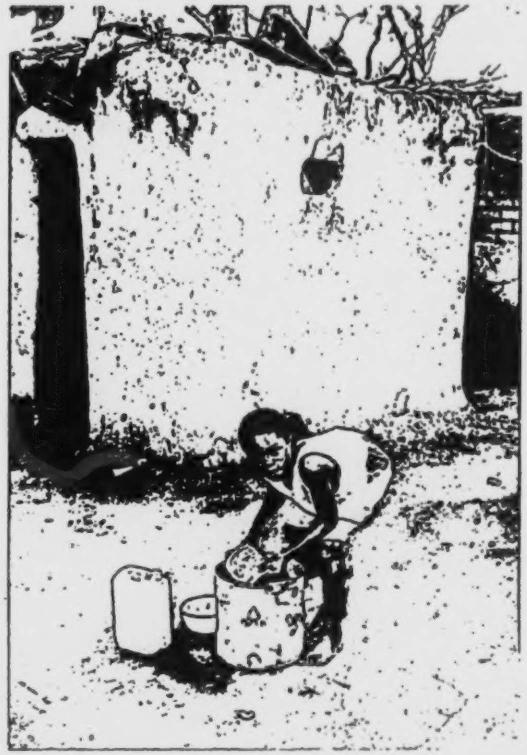
> *"The problem of squatters exists in all cities and towns of Zimbabwe...Rapid urbanization resulting from the ever-increasing rural-urban drift, has far outstripped the existing housing supply. This is due in large measure to both inadequate and inappropriate housing provision and policies. Other contributing factors include the high unemployment rate due to a lack of appropriate skills and the current economic difficulties arising from the Structural Adjustment Programme. In Harare the problem has been growing steadily and will reach alarming proportions unless urgent steps are taken to provide appropriate low-cost housing....In a study carried out by local town planning experts in 1994, commissioned by the Zimbabwe Institute of Urban Planners, it was reported that 110,000 (or approximately 10% of the Harare urban population) were squatters living in*

> *informal settlements in places like Dzivarasekwa, Hatcliffe, Porta and Churu Farms, Korstein in Seke and Epworth."*[1]

Migration to the cities of Zimbabwe, particularly Harare, is expected to continue into the future due to a variety of causes. These include rural poverty, overcrowded communal lands, youth unemployment and population movements due to war (for example, many Mozambicans fled to Zimbabwe during the civil war and a considerable number have not returned). Most of Zimbabwe's cities are also growing rapidly through natural increase in population as children are born to parents already residing in urban areas. Harare City Council puts the city's natural growth rate at 11 percent per annum.[2]

## Temporary Holding Camps

Dzivarasekwa Extension and Porta Farm are just two of a number of peri-urban, informal settlements that exist around Harare. These communities are a type of settlement referred to by government as temporary holding camps. Because of the "temporary" nature of such areas, government services in the areas of housing, education, health, sanitation, and basic infrastructure are entirely inadequate, if provided at all. Although municipal authorities contend that any substantial investment in informal communities only attracts more residents and is a waste of resources due to their impermanent nature, this policy has a particularly negative impact on the development of children.



The officially temporary nature of both settlements also fuels a generally negative

6

## CASE STUDY

### Our Lives in Porta Farm

***I am Emma Maruta. I am a 42-year-old woman. I am one of two health workers, employed by a charitable organization, at Porta Farm. I come from Domboshawa.***

***There are more than 4,000 people living at Porta Farm. Having such a large number of people living in a place without proper sanitation is risky. It puts them at risk of diseases such as cholera, diarrhoea, malaria and others.***

***Porta Farm is an unhealthy environment to live in for a number of reasons. Firstly, although there are some Blair toilets, there are not enough for all the people living here. Besides, many people opt to use the bush. This is in itself a health threat. Secondly many people are so poor that they are forced to eat food they pick from the rubbish heaps or bins. Some of these people bring the meat home and prepare it for the whole family to eat. They later get sick.***

***During the past rainy season, some old ladies got into the habit of catching dead fish. No one knows how long these fish*** ☛

***had been dead, yet the old ladies would eat it. Again many got sick.***

***As health workers we move around from house to house, educating people about the dangers of this type of behaviour. But it is difficult, for example, to try and persuade someone not to eat meat, which he has already set his eyes on. But we try our best. We find that most of the people who do these kinds of things are the same ones that do not want to attend meetings. They also do not want to entertain us in their homes.***

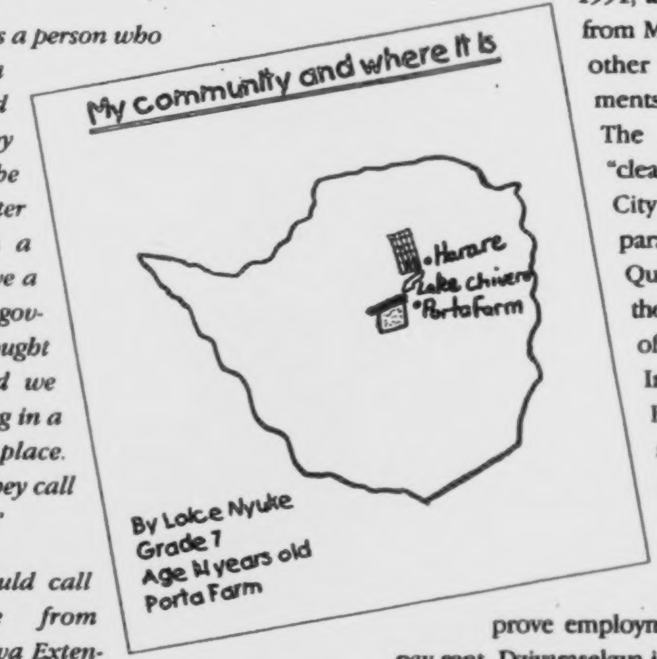
***We have been doing a number of things aimed at improving the health situation here in Porta Farm and at raising people's awareness of the importance of a clean environment. Last year we made bricks which we wanted to use to build our club house. But then the rains came and we had to stop. We hope to continue this year. We will use the club house for our meetings.***

***Every Friday we have mass health meetings at which we discuss child and adult health and ways of maintaining a healthy environment. Porta Farm is very crowded. In fact it is so crowded that it would be surprising if there was not an outbreak of cholera. As women, we should be able to look after this environment.***

conception by the wider urban community. Both the media and city dwellers repeatedly call residents of Dzivarasekwa Extension and Porta Farm "squatters", when in fact they are legal residents of a temporary settlement. Children strongly decry such labels.

> *"A squatter is a person who lives in a probibited place. So why should I be called squatter when I am a boy and have a name? The government brought us here and we are not living in a probibited place. So why do they call us squatter?"*

> *"People should call us people from Dzivarasekwa Extension, call us people, call us by our names. We are all the same and by calling us squatters, they are just insulting us."*



## The History of Porta Farm and Dzivarasekwa Extension

The majority of residents at Porta Farm were moved to the site, 35km west of Harare, in 1991, after being rounded up from Mbare, Epworth and 19 other spontaneous settlements in and around Harare. The round - up was a "cleansing exercise" by the City of Harare in preparation for the visit of the Queen of England and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. In 1992 the City of Harare built wooden shacks at Dzivarasekwa Extension, 18km west of Harare, and moved everybody from Porta Farm who could prove employment and the ability to pay rent. Dzivarasekwa itself was meant to be a three-month temporary solution while alternatives were found, but nobody at Dzivarasekwa has received houses to date and conditions are as poor as those of Porta Farm.

Attempts were also made to resettle residents of Porta Farm in rural areas, but most

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returned, finding it impossible to survive without inputs or tools to till the land. The City of Harare police continued to bring people to Porta Farm and by June 1998 there was an estimated population of 3,000 adults and 1,000 children housed in 982 shacks.[3]

In 1995 the City Council once again attempted to evict all the residents of Porta Farm, amassing policemen, bulldozers and dogs, and were only blocked at the last minute by a High Court Order which residents obtained with the assistance of a Zimbabwe human rights organization, Zimrights. The order protects the residents from eviction until the City Council either finds permanent alternative accommodation or convinces the High Court that it is justified in removing them.

In October 1998, the total population of Porta Farm was 3,547. This comprised 1,867 children and 1,680 adults. The population of Dzivarasekwa Extension was 3,180, consisting of 1,457 adults and 1,723 children.[4]

## Conditions in Dzivarasekwa Extension and Porta Farm

Basic rights such as the right to citizenship, housing, education, health, and livelihood which Zimbabwe guarantees all its citizens, and which are enshrined in such documents as 'The Convention On The Rights Of The Child' and the 'African Charter on Human and People's Rights', are violated in peri-urban informal settlements. On July 16th, 1997, the Minister For Health noted in a national newspaper that,

> *"it is as if Dzivarasekwa, Hatcliffe and Porta Farm are dumping grounds, without serious thought given to the consequences of allowing such vast numbers of people in these areas,"*

and described the situation as,

> *"the largest scar on the public health landscape."*

Commenting on an increasing lack of services and facilities in urban areas another commentator claimed:

> *"Government development priorities have been to address rural poverty and landlessness. Commercial housing delivery systems within the urban areas have failed the urban poor. Their needs have not been addressed. Solutions that have been aimed at the urban poor have, due to a lack of financial resources, land and an enabling environment, meant that they are further marginalized."*[5]

***For example, many holes were created when people were making bricks. We want to close holes because we realize that they are a breeding ground for mosquitoes. We will use them as rubbish dumps. We also encourage women to fill up any areas of stagnant water with soil. Again this will prevent the spread of diseases such as diarrhoea and malaria. There are some taps but these are few.***

***Prostitution is very rampant at Porta Farm. Children here are forced into prostitution by the harsh economic climate and the desire to raise money for school fees. Boys spend days fishing and selling fish, hoping to raise money for school. The only solution is to have a government school nearby. We hope to change things here and live in a safer environment. This can only happen if everyone at Porta Farm works towards the same goal.***

Residents of Dzivarasekwa Extension and Porta Farm live either in log cabins allocated by government, or shacks made out of plastic sheeting, thatch and tin. Despite the general perception that the populations of peri-urban, informal settlements are foreigners, 70% of the settlers in Porta Farm and Dzivarasekwa Extension are Zimbabwean. The majority of the heads of households are not formally employed (77%) and a female de facto head supports a third of all households.[4]

The environmental difficulties experienced by communities living in peri-urban, informal settlements make it difficult for women to fully participate in community projects. Although literature describes unemployment or under-employment as being a primary problem, the actual problem is that of over-employment and under-payment. Many of the so-called unemployed or under-employed living in Dzivarasekwa Extension and Porta Farm are working long hours, six or seven days a week. Women are classified as unemployed because their work is not official or registered.

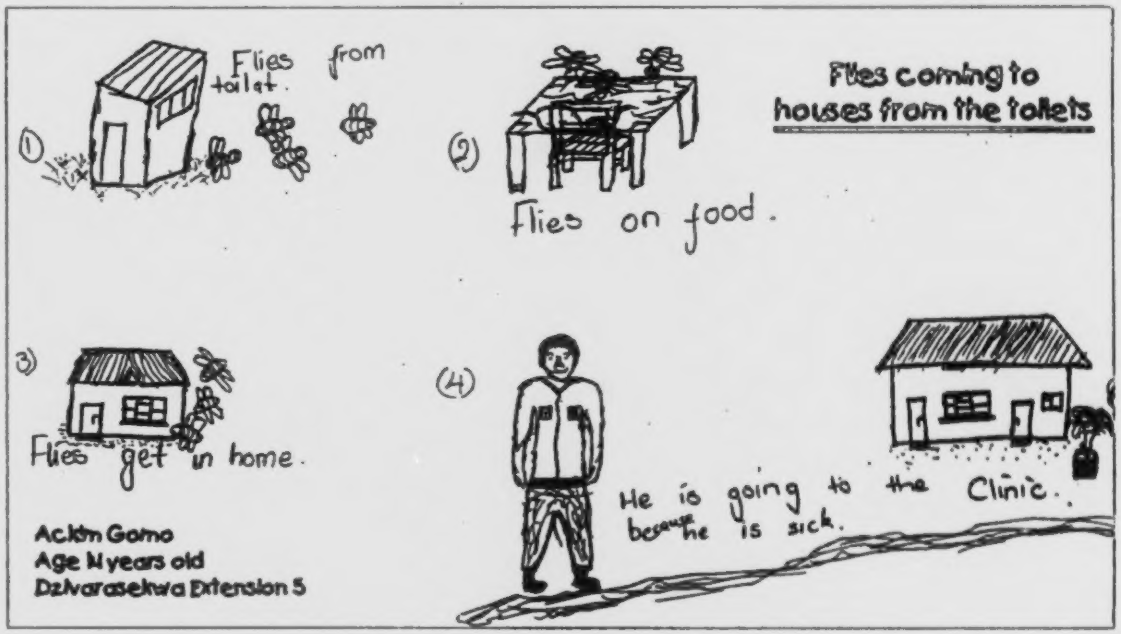
## Environment

The living environment of each settlement is poor. Dzivarasekwa Extension does have council bins for refuse disposal, but the City of Harare only intermittently collects them. The population of Porta Farm depends entirely on communal pits, dumping or burning of refuse. Neither settlement has adequate sanitation. Communal latrines are too far away from residents' houses, overflow with sewage, and have no lighting, making them impossible to use at night.

The school in Porta Farm is not formally registered with the Ministry of Education and Culture. One consequence of this is that teachers are only recognized as study group tutors, and therefore are paid considerably less than colleagues from recognized schools.

Each settlement has a pre-school with enrolment as high as 400 children in Dzivarasekwa Extension, and primary schools that employ "hot seating" to accommodate all of their pupils. Parents in both communities have difficulty in paying school fees and buying school uniforms for their children. Only Dzivarasekwa Extension has a secondary school.

The schools in each settlement do not have adequate infrastructure or facilities to enable an effective delivery of education. The teacher pupil ratio is too high and, on average, 12


① Flies from toilet.
(2) Flies on food.
3) Flies get in home.
(4) He is going to the Clinic. because he is sick.

**Flies coming to houses from the toilets**

Ackim Gomo
Age 11 years old
Dzivarasekwa Extension 5

pupils share one book. Such a deficient learning environment, combined with the pressures upon children to contribute to their family's income, causes a significant number of children to "drop out" of the school system.

## Nutrition And Health

In a census conducted in October 1998, only 53% of households in Porta Farm and Dzivarasekwa reported eating three meals a day.[4] These meals are also often nutritionally unbalanced due to the difficulty in accessing a wide range of food and also to fluctuating personal incomes. Although health education is, or has been, provided in each community, the above census revealed that more needs to be done to transform this knowledge into practice.[6] Neither community has a fully operational clinic and Porta Farm residents use the Norton hospital (a distance of 8km), while Dzivarasekwa Extension residents use the clinics in Dzivarasekwa (7km away).[7] In the case study on page 6 a health worker from Porta Farm provides an overview of conditions within her community, and the urgent steps that need to be taken to improve the situation.

## The Need For Information

Another factor hampering the delivery of appropriate services and assistance to the above communities is the problem of comprehensive and qualitative information. Little systematic research has been conducted in these communities. Where it has taken place, the information has generally been procured in an extractive, non-participative manner, giving little insight into people's real perceptions of their problems and what solutions they might contribute to.

While several organizations have adopted a more participatory approach and delivered significant benefits to residents of Porta Farm and Dzivarasekwa Extension (see Appendix 2), a lack of close community consultation can further disempower people in relation to their own development needs. Observers have remarked on the welfare culture that has developed in these communities and the sense of fatalism that is evident among many families. While this is partly due to the transient nature of the population, and the uncertain state in which they live due to fear of eviction, charitable interventions need to guard against increasing this dependency.

One of the main aims of the following project with children has been to generate information, in as empowering a manner as possible, which can be used to establish appropriate programmes.

## Notes

[1] *See Diana Auret, "Urban Housing – A National Crisis", Mambo Press and The Catholic Commission For Justice And Peace, 1995.*

[2] *Harare City Council, 1992. "Annual Report For The Department Of Housing And Community Services."*

[3] *Inter Country Peoples' Aid, Report, 1998.*

[4] *Inter Country People's Aid / UNICEF Census, October, 1998.*

[5] *Ms Bathsheba Biti, Director of "Dialogue On Shelter For The Homeless."*

[6] *Nearly half of all residents of Porta Farm, Dzivarasekwa Extensions and Hatcliffe Extension have received no health education on environmental issues, family planning and reproductive health, maternal and child health, and HIV / AIDS education. Very few heads of households had received information on drug and alcohol abuse.*

[7] *Jabula New Life Ministries are currently providing a mobile clinic service to Porta Farm twice a week. A clinic built by IPA in Dzivarasekwa Extension is being staffed by the City Of Harare, once a month.*

# CHAPTER 3

# THE RESEARCH PROJECT

In early 1998, Save The Children Fund (UK) (SCF) in collaboration with Inter Country People's Aid (IPA), carried out a situation analysis in Porta Farm to find out about the conditions in which people, especially children, were living. It was felt that there was insufficient information on the situation within these communities to ensure that programmes were adequately targeting people's needs. Various groups were interviewed, which included men, women, local leaders, youth and children.

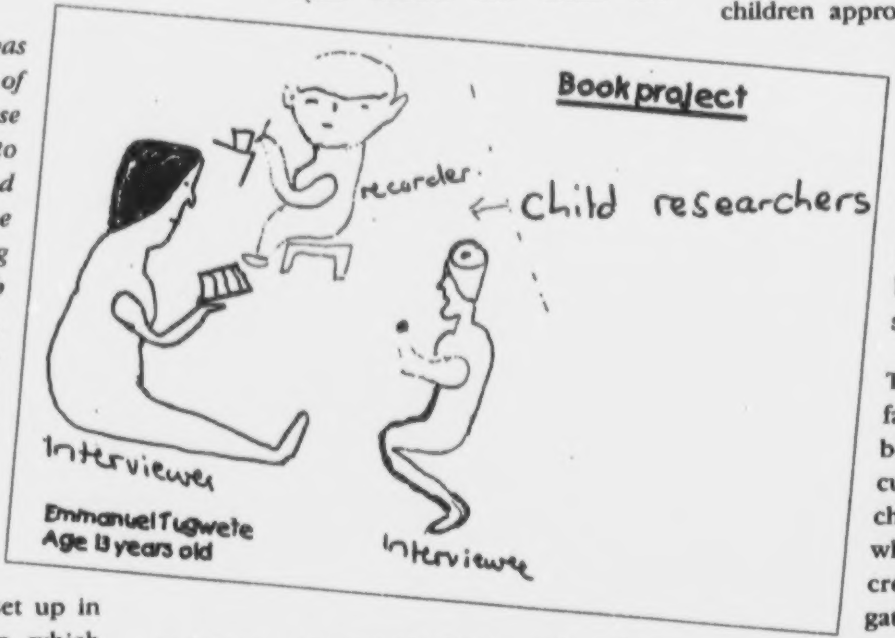
When the children were being interviewed, they complained that there was not enough time for them to explain the gravity of their situation. This also reflected a perception that the research process had been extractive and had not fully involved them in describing their needs and their proposed solutions for the future. These criticisms prompted SCF and IPA to devise a more extensive and participatory research programme. It was felt that this kind of research would not only yield more comprehensive and qualitative information for both programming and advocacy purposes but that the process itself would also be important, in terms of encouraging children to better analyse and understand their own situation.

This decision to involve children as researchers was extremely popular with the children themselves, many of whom claimed that this was the first time that anyone had shown any willingness to listen to their opinions. It also allowed them to develop a range of skills, which in turn led to a considerable growth in their confidence and self-esteem. Claimed one of the researchers from Dzivarasekwa Extension,

> *"Before the research project, I was embarrassed to stand in front of people and talk. However, because of this research, I am now able to stand in front of people and engage them in discussions. The other benefit is that after making a presentation and going through a question and answer session, people in the research group would give you feedback. Listening to others is something we all need to improve."*

## The Process [1]

The children's research team was set up in August 1998, during a workshop which involved 38 children and four adult facilitators. Half of the children came from Porta Farm and half from Dzivarasekwa Extension, with an equal gender distribution among both groups. The initial selection of researchers was partly mediated through two schools in the respective communities. While it was felt important that the researchers had reasonable levels of literacy, so as to be able to effectively document the views of their peers, the project co-ordinators were clear that the predominance of in-school children in the team should not mean the exclusion of out-of-school and other disadvantaged youths.



Emmanuel Tugwete
Age 13 years old

The workshop aimed at introducing the group to the project and setting up a core team of researchers. Because of the diverse backgrounds of the children it was also felt important to encourage team building and trust among them. The children were introduced to a variety of participatory methodologies for the collection of information.

One of the interesting features about this section of the workshop was the way in which children approached discussions about the proposed research tools. They eagerly contributed their ideas and suggestions as to how these could be modified to more adequately meet the conditions in the community and what would be more acceptable and stimulating for their peers.

This contribution reflected the fact that children themselves best understand the language, culture and interests of other children in their community, which in turn allowed them to create more effective data-gathering tools. The researchers were also keen to ensure that a variety of techniques were on offer, especially those which allowed them to communicate through drawings, diagrams and other forms of non-verbal expression. Another 17-year-old researcher from Dzivarasekwa Extension had this to say about the importance of drawing people into discussion if the interaction is to be meaningful:

> *"Through this project, I learnt how to handle and work with children. I also learnt how to get along with them. I got to know the various research techniques, for example, the use of dramas and plays to draw out issues and to loosen people up during the interviews. These techniques made the research process easier for us. The plays were on social and inter-social issues. They were performed by children. Sometimes we had to talk about our own problems as a way of getting people to speak to us."*

As the project progressed the original group of 38 children finally reduced to a core team of 10 researchers in Dzivarasekwa and 15 in Porta Farm. The others dropped out for a variety of reasons, often to do with heavy domestic chores and family income-generating activities which did not leave them time to get involved in the project. Partly arising from the children's observations, the research programme adopted a flexible timetable to accommodate their other commitments. They were specifically concerned, for example, that it was the examination term and that they needed time to study. It was therefore decided to extend the research period and that the children would collect data during weekends.

The actual research programme took place over a four-month period, from September to October, 1998. This included the following activities:

- *Skills build-up of the child researchers by adult co-ordinators, taking into account their various ages.*
- *Field testing of research tools and revision of methodologies in the light of feedback.*
- *Systematic data collection by children with their peers in both monitored and unmonitored sessions.*
- *Collation of the collected data.*
- *Sharing of information about what the researchers experienced during the entire research process, the difficulties encountered and likes, lessons learnt, etc.*

## Obstacles And Difficulties Overcome

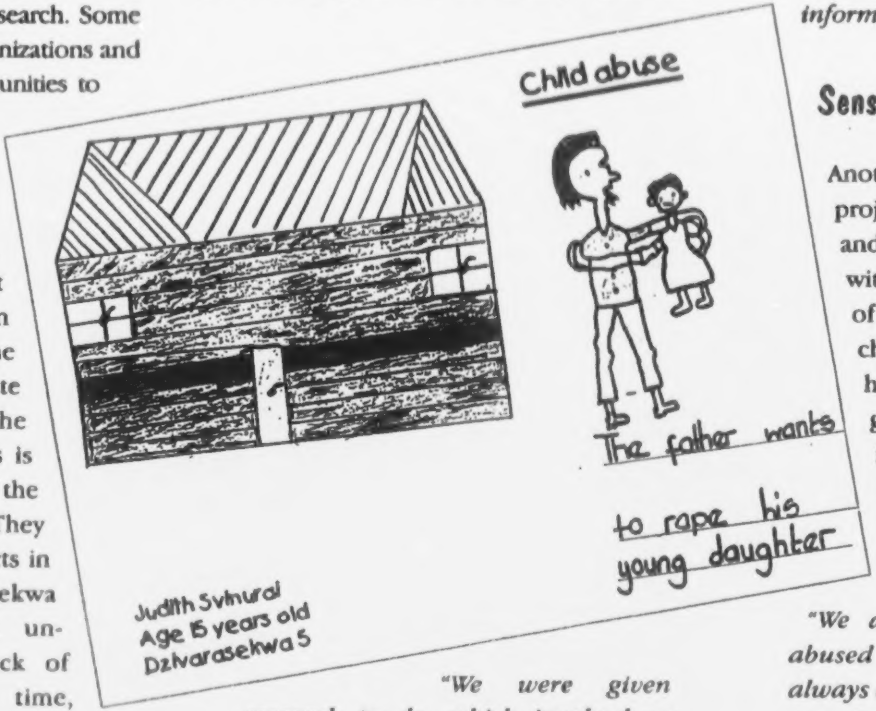
Although initial discussions had been carried out with children it was important for them to inform their parents and other community members about the project. There were some isolated cases of adults who were hostile or apathetic, claiming that research was a waste of time and intrusive. Some even intimidated the children in the course of their activities. This reaction, albeit isolated and not universal, led to additional consultative meetings with the development committees from both communities. Once informed about the value of the research these committees were very supportive, helping to convince sceptical community members as to why the project was important.

There were also difficulties with parents who wanted their children to perform duties other than participating in activities such as training and research. This led the project to strike a balance of holding brief sessions with children so as not to compromise their normal day-to-day chores. According to some parents, attending the project became a lost opportunity for their child to generate family income. Together with children and parents, the project co-ordinators arrived at an acceptable timetable which reduced this source of friction. In a few cases, however, parents withdrew their children for the above reasons.

The deprived nature of both communities has also created a situation whereby many people in these settlements have become used to getting assistance from wellwishers. This has helped to create a culture of dependency, which in turn posed some difficulties for the children. Many of them were questioned by community members and parents as to what tangible benefits would be received, as a result of their research. Some people pointed out that other organizations and individuals had visited their communities to see their condition, yet nothing had happened.

To meet these objections the co-ordinators of the project, members of the development committees and the children themselves had to explain that the first step in devising appropriate and long-term solutions to the problem of informal settlements is to understand the true nature of the difficulties that face people. They pointed out that there are projects in Porta Farm and Dzivarasekwa Extension which have been unsuccessful because of this lack of understanding. At the same time, promoting community responsibility for its own development is an important step in moving away from dependency on handouts and support from wellwishers.

It was for this reason that the children included in their questions and interviews, a section on proposed solutions and what people could do for themselves to improve their situation. From an initial situation of some community hostility, children noted a definite change as their research progressed.



*"We were given research to do, which involved us asking groups of people questions relating to their situation. We found these groups at soccer matches and at the market place. Through the research, people were expected to identify the problems they are facing and to find solutions to them. Initially people looked down on us, forcing some researchers to withdraw. But after a while many of them appreciated the whole idea and provided us with the information we needed."*

## Sensitive Issues

Another issue that arose during the project was the issue of confidentiality and how the researchers should deal with sensitive information. The process of engaging in discussions with children, many of whom have rarely had the opportunity to have their grievances heard, yielded several instances where abuse was indicated. One researcher came up with the following information from a group of respondents.

*"We are physically and mentally abused by our stepmothers. They always accuse us of something we have not done. If anything is missing at home, we are always blamed. Some of us girls are given men, whom we do not want. If the men we are given become broke, our stepmothers usually look for another man with money. Some children are abused by stepfathers, while their mothers are away."*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

During the orientation process children were given strict guidelines about the issue of confidentiality. If information was divulged to them of this nature, it was not to be discussed with other members of the group in a public forum but with the adult co-ordinators in private, who would then consider the most appropriate response.

At the same time the questions and interview methods used by the children were not designed to probe this area in a personal manner so as to reveal actual instances. It was clear to the project co-ordinators that this was a topic that required professional skills and that it was unfair on both the researchers and respondents to expect them to be able to handle an issue of such sensitivity. Discussions with other children, therefore, were kept general and in nearly all cases instances of abuse were reported by the respondents in the third person, i.e., "We know of someone in the community who was abused by her stepfather," etc.

Yet in a few cases some children wanted to report their own physical abuse. These were passed on to the adult co-ordinators for onward referral to a more professional counsellor or other members in the community who were judged to be competent and better placed to deal with the issue. Claimed one of the adult co-ordinators of the project,

> *"The subject of child abuse has not been particularly easy to deal with in these communities. Unless services, professional counselling and legal protection is available, a child who reports abuse can be placed in an even worse situation. There is need to establish an education, protection and care programme in these communities if this problem is to be adequately addressed."*

## Success Through Perseverance

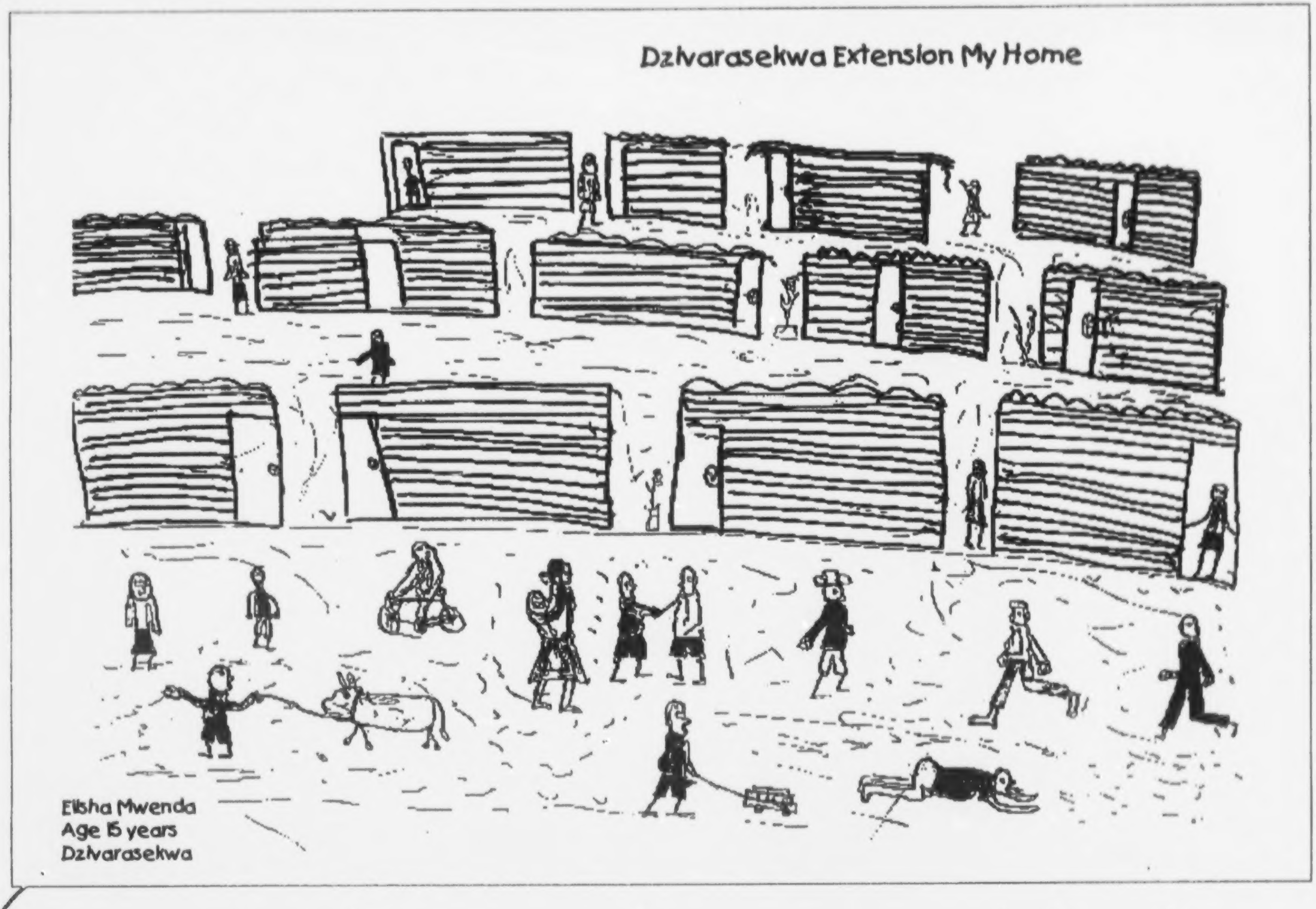
In the end parents, teachers and adult co-ordinators of the project were extremely impressed by the levels of commitment and enthusiasm shown by the children. The researchers concluded that the project had been educational and exciting, and that they were inspired by the fact that the co-ordinators of the project were there to listen to their problems and give them advice. This was something that many of them stated was lacking in their lives.

At the same time the researchers were also inspired by the willingness and ability of their counterparts to give them information at the level of detail they wanted. Many controversial debates and discussions took place, both among the researchers and between them and their peers, but these were conducted in a spirit of respect and sensitivity to different views. More importantly the research revealed to many of the children some aspects of life in their communities that they were formerly unaware of. It prompted some children to realize that others were in a more unfortunate condition than themselves. Concluded a 15-year-old researcher from Porta Farm,

> *"Many children have a lot of problems. Some of us have parents who fight every night. Some are orphans. Some come to school without having eaten anything. Yet still they come to school. Some of our problems are of how we are treated by parents and step-parents, who force children to sleep outside. Many of us have serious shortages of money. The research made me realize that everyone has a problem, even though we usually think that we are the only ones who suffer."*

## Notes

[1] *For more specific information about the research tools and their use, see Appendix 1*


Dzivarasekwa Extension My Home

Elisha Mwenda
Age 15 years
Dzivarasekwa

# Chapter 4

## The Lives Of Children In Informal Settlements

This chapter sets out the main research findings. It is divided into sections that explore children's views on issues to do with their identity, living environment, education, health, economic situation, vulnerability and gender. It concludes with children's recommendations for change and their hopes and aspirations for the future. Most of the information in this section was yielded by the researchers, who explored with their peers and adults their perceptions about their situation in Porta Farm and Dzivarasekwa Extension. A more comprehensive description of the methods used by the children is provided in Appendix 1.

This information is also supplemented by some group and individual interviews conducted by adults, which presents in more detail the lives of particular children in these communities. The aim throughout this chapter is to honour, through the writings, drawings and words of children, Article 13 of the Convention On The Rights Of The Child. (CRC) This states,

> *"The child shall have the right to freedom of expression. This right shall involve freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice".*

# ISSUES OF IDENTITY

## What We Want To Be Called

People living in Porta Farm and Dzivarasekwa Extension have been referred to as squatters. However, there was a consensus among children that the term is objectionable (80% of respondents in Porta Farm and 89% Dzivarasekwa Extension). While most children felt it was demeaning and degrading to be called "squatter", many adults in the community were indifferent about what they were called. They said they were so disillusioned, that they did not see a bright future for themselves or their children. Although it pained them to be in their situation, they had reached a level of acceptance and resignation that was not evident among many children. The children claimed:

- *We want to be called people from Porta Farm because we are all residents of Zimbabwe.*

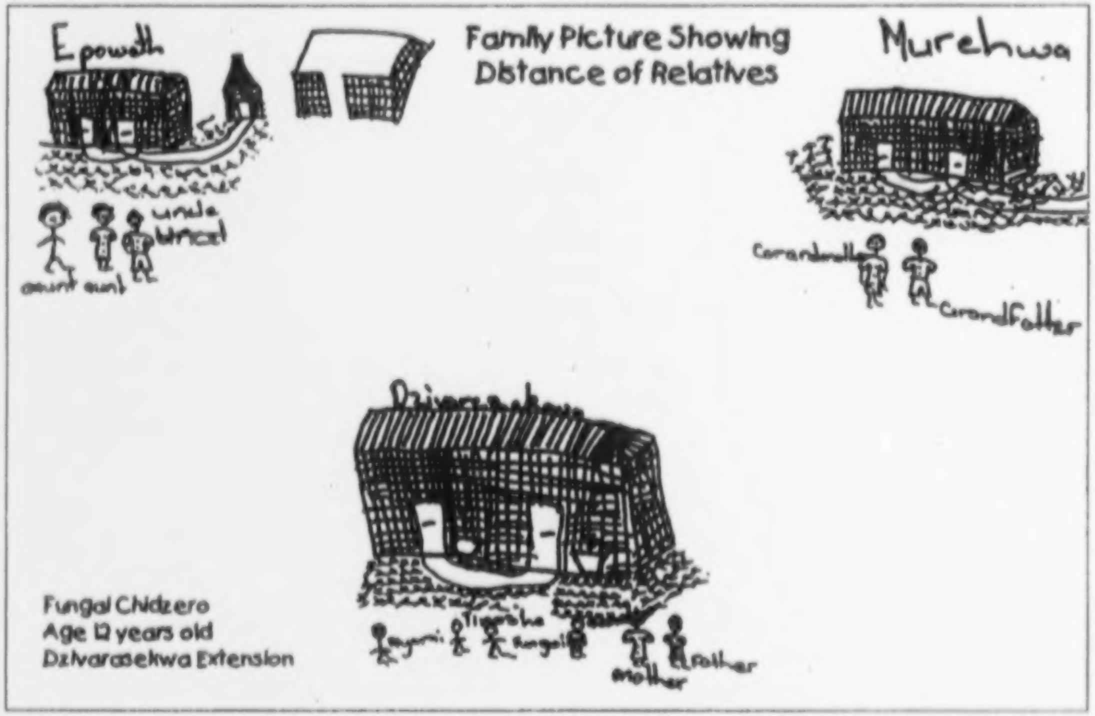
- *Why should we have a special name? We want to be called like any other people. We don't want to be labelled.*

- *People like to call others names, in order to label them. Often people call me "chirema" (a disabled person) but I ignore them because there is nothing I can do about my condition. Other people think they are normal but it is just that their disability is not as visible as mine. I would like to be called a boy, to be called by name. That is how I want to be identified and not as a disabled person. A squatter is a person who lives in a prohibited place. So why should I be called a squatter when I am a boy and have a name? The government brought us here and so we do not live in a prohibited place. Why then do people call us squatters?*

- *We should be called people because the word "squatter" does not address people, but refers to the houses we live in.*

- *Why are we not called "Children of God" since God is the creator?*

- *One boy argued with his friends at a Focus Group Discussion conducted by children that he wanted them to be called "squatter". "We should be called squatters because we are suffering people". This statement led to a lively debate.*


Family Picture Showing Distance of Relatives
Epowrth
uncle
Uncal
aunt
aunt
Murehwa
Grandmother
Grandfather
Dzivarasekwa
Tigarisha
Fungai
mother
father
Fungai Chidzero
Age 12 years old
Dzivarasekwa Extension

- *The word "squatter" is often used to describe us. People who use this word often have personal vendettas against an individual and so choose to label him with such a name. But many don't really know the true meaning of the word. News reporters, politicians and others with political interests use this naming to their advantage and this bothers me. People must know what they are talking about before they open their mouths. I want to be named like any other people in the community because we are no different from them. The only difference is that we live in poor locations and they live in nice houses.*

- *I find it very upsetting that someone can call me a squatter. It makes me think that perhaps we (the people of Porta Farm) are different from other people, and this is why we are called squatters. To me, a squatter is a group of people raided by the police, forced out of their homes and left in a place such as Mukuvisi to live there. I did not choose to live here but the police forced me. Why can't people refer to us as people in the peri-urban areas? After all, that is what we are.*

- *A squatter camp is a small place where a lot of people live illegally in cabins and other temporary structures. For example, we know we are squatters because we have to wait for primary school children to finish before we can attend school in the afternoon. If we were not squatters, this would not have to happen as we would have our own classrooms.*

## The Right To A Name And Nationality

> *"States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognized by law without unlawful interference. Where a child is illegally deprived of some or all of these elements of his or her identity, State Parties shall provide appropriate assistance and protection, with a view to speedily re-establishing his or her identity" (Article 8 "The Convention on The Rights of the Child").*

Almost half of all children living in these settlements are without birth certificates. To access such a document, national identity papers for parents as well as hospital confirmation of births, are required. Confusion about the registration process, lack of access to information, the foreign origin of some families, and high levels of unregistered births have resulted in the denial of citizenship to many children. This deprives them of a range of rights in relation to education, health care, social welfare provision and their future ability to transfer citizenship to their own children.

- *Some of us do not have birth certificates or any other legal documentation. It becomes difficult for us to be accepted at school.*

- *Even if some of us are accepted at school without appropriate documentation, we will not be allowed to sit our final exams. This can be discouraging and leads to many of us dropping out.*

- *I do not have a birth certificate because my parents lived apart for a long time. We did not have the money to go to Gweru and bring my father to Harare so that we could go to the National Registration Office and get my birth certificate.*

- *If you do not have a birth certificate, people always suspect you of being a foreigner.*

- *I do not have a birth certificate because we still owe a lot of rent to the owner of the house in which we live. We can only think of getting it once all the money owed is paid up. I am writing exams this year. But my mother does not have a national identity card because it was lost when our house burnt down. This means I cannot get a birth certificate.*

- *If you do not have a national identity card and a birth certificate, people suspect you of being a thief. The police can harass you for living here illegally.*

- *Without documents you cannot be identified if you are involved in an accident and you cannot get a job because no one will have evidence of where you are from and where to find you if needed.*

## Cultural Identity

1) The Convention On The Rights Of The Child (CRC) promotes the right of children to enjoy their own culture and traditions. Those children who have access to extended family and other relatives express the positive impact such an interaction can have on their lives. Nevertheless many children, during the research, complained that they are deprived of such contact. Family disintegration, weak community structures and social exclusion limit children's access to a variety of influences which can positively shape their norms and values.

- *We don't sit down with our aunts and uncles to talk because they live far away from us. That's why it is difficult to see them often.*

- *When we sit down with our aunts we talk about problems of marriage and they advise us not to marry at an early age.*

- *I have no grandparents I can stay with in our family, as we originally came from Malawi. We have only heard about our extended family through the stories our parents tell us. Some of my friends who have no links with their relatives have no one to advise or look after them when their parents die.*

- *I don't sit down with my aunts and uncles as I don't have relatives from my extended family here. My father told me that he came from Malawi on his own and married my mother, who is from Mozambique.*

- *We have no money to visit relatives in parts of the country which are far from Harare, even during school holidays. If we stayed near our relatives this would help us to get advice on the need to be careful about boyfriends and not to rush in to early marriages. Usually we do not listen to other people who try to warn us about our bad behaviour.*

2) Cultural practices can influence the lives of children in both positive and negative ways. The discussions around these issues during the research were particularly lively, with a variety of opinions expressed.

- *It is common knowledge that when a child has joined "Gure" (see glossary) his or her chances of going to school will be reduced. Boys become stubborn when they become "Gure" members. They stop listening to teachers, bully other children, learn to smoke and drink beer. At school they are laughed at by other children who know their trade. These boys will be considering themselves as adults.*

- *We like to watch the Gure dancers performing but we do not like it when they cause havoc in people's lives. Girls are sometimes forced to sing for long hours and at awkward times. They also steal from us, as well as beat us for no apparent reason.*

- *Through promoting culture we get in touch with our past and we get in touch with our family place of origin.*

- *Learning about culture helps us to grow up respecting elders.*

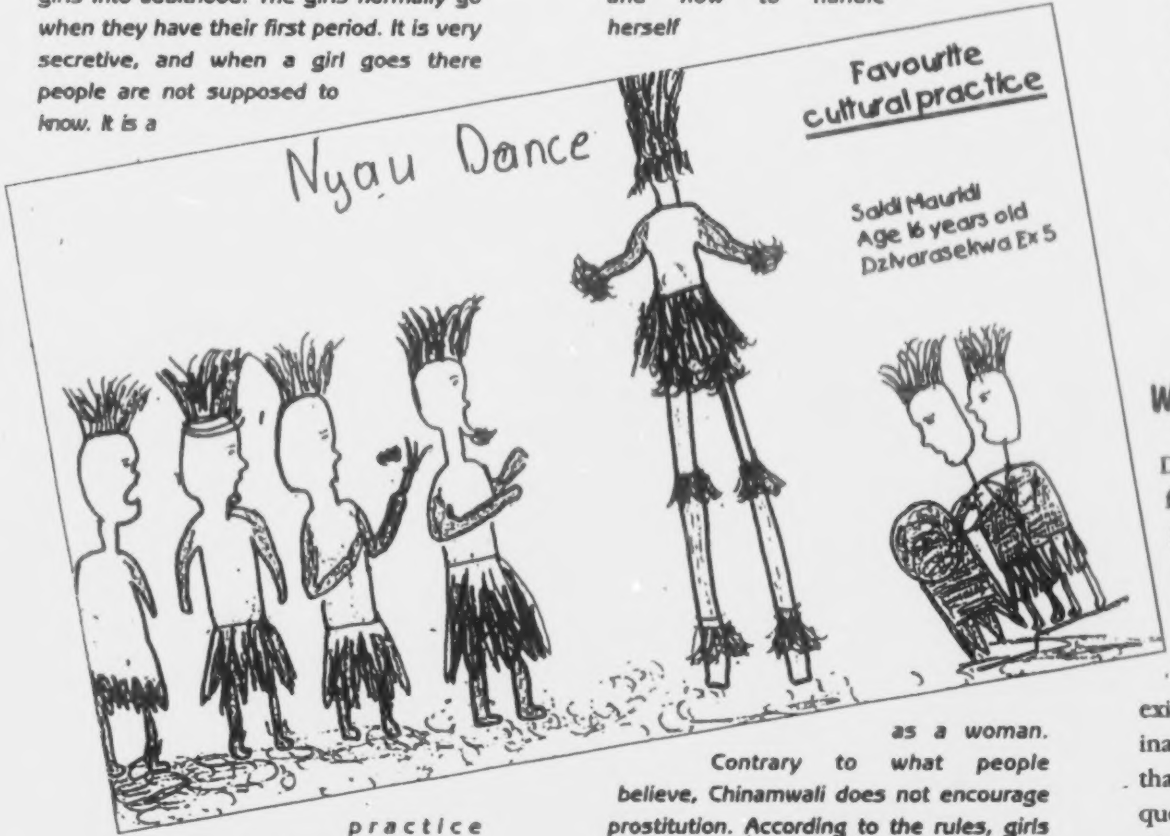
- *Some cultural activities, such as dancing, contribute to making our bodies fit and strong.*

- *Cultural activities are entertaining.*

- *Cultural activities enable us to have a sense of identity.*

- *"Kuzvarirwa" is one of the negative cultural practices, where parents force their daughters to marry a man who is not of their choice. They will also be married at an early age. This makes the child vulnerable to abuse and infection. In some cases it can lead to suicide.*

- *"Chinamwali" is an initiation rite for girls into adulthood. The girls normally go when they have their first period. It is very secretive, and when a girl goes there people are not supposed to know. It is a practice normally done within the Malawian, Mozambican and Zambian cultures. Some girls are sent to relatives on distant farms, who come from these countries, for their initiation. They spend at least one month situated in the bush where they are not seen by people. The initiation is to prepare a girl for marriage and how to handle herself as a woman. Contrary to what people believe, Chinamwali does not encourage prostitution. According to the rules, girls are checked monthly to see whether they have slept with anyone. The girls are taught how to respect their husbands, how to cook and wash for them and how to handle their husbands.*



- *"Chigodza" is a sort of gambling game whereby people pledge money. Losing in this game will force children to steal money from other people so that they can play again.*

- *One girl among us was given away to a man for money by her grandmother. The girl is doing Grade Six and we don't know when she is going to stay with her husband.*

## THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT

### Water, Sanitation And Waste Disposal

Despite the construction of latrines by families and some NGOs, the sanitation facilities in both communities are inadequate to meet community needs. Over 80% of child respondents in Dzivarasekwa Extension indicated that they either have no latrines, or those that exist are unusable. Water supplies are both inadequate and intermittent with the result that children spend large parts of their day queuing up to meet their family's needs. 88% of child respondents identified pits near toilets and the toilets themselves as the places where rubbish was dumped. This led to their blockage. 12% of children interviewed, indicated that they used informal dumps for waste disposal at the periphery of their communities.

- *Our families have no money to buy bricks to build new toilets and to have an individual toilet on each stand.*

- *The few toilets that are available are dirty and poorly constructed. Some are cracking and falling down because of heavy rains.*

- *The toilets are not functioning well and water from the toilets flows to our homes during the rainy season. As the toilets are filled up, flies come from the toilets to our homes causing a lot of disease.*

- *The latrines have no lights and so we do not use them at night. One woman was raped in the dark toilets. It has become risky for women and girls. At night we use the bush.*

- *We cannot access water at times because some people damage taps or take them in order to sell them.*

- *We like meeting our friends at water points, yet water logging and dirty pools are common. The community could dig trenches to solve this problem.*

- *We spend a lot of time queuing for water and we fetch it more than once a day.*

- *Sometimes the taps will be closed all day. Then we have to fetch water from springs or from unprotected wells. This makes us suffer from diarrhoea and places us at risk of cholera.*

- *There are very few pits dug for the purposes of waste disposal. Some families use pits that were abandoned after moulding bricks. These pits, however, are a health hazard as they are potential mosquito breeding places and death traps for younger children.*

## Housing

Children in Porta Farm live in overcrowded pole and dagga structures. Those at Dzivarasekwa Extension live in government-built wooden cabins. Both types of structures provide inadequate shelter. Children observed that their small huts generally accommodate between seven and eleven people. These dwellings have been particularly threatened by heavy rains during the 1999 season, because of their flimsy construction. The school headmaster in Porta Farm stated that some children are not attending school because they are too busy repairing their damaged homes.

- *In my family we are nine people living in a small hut. We all sleep in the same room with our brothers and our parents. We do not like these overcrowded conditions.*

- *The problem of not having good housing causes leaking roofs and falling houses during the rainy season, and cold during winter. When we are sleeping we can be hurt or even die because of falling bricks. We are also suffering from colds and coughs as a result of the leaking roofs.*

- *We have many problems in our community, but what upsets me most is when thieves break into our huts and steal our food and belongings. Our huts can not be properly locked up and are therefore not secure. We can never leave them unattended, either at night or during the day. The neighbourhood watch in our community have caught some thieves. They were taken to the nearest police station.*

- *We can form a co-operative, make contributions and save the money. Once we have enough money, we can start building houses for ourselves. It is time we had homes that are permanent and not those that are temporary.*

## Standard of Living

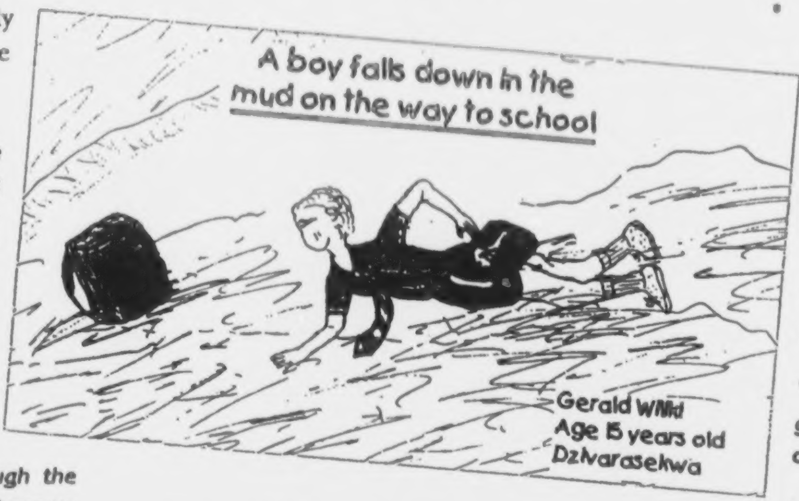
The CRC recognizes the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. Yet conditions in these two communities do not allow these rights to be fulfilled. During the rainy season, due to poor drainage and untarred roads, children live in an environment of thick mud, leaking roofs and untreated sewage. Degradation of the surrounding vegetation means that the dry season is characterized by large amounts of dust blown into people's houses. These environmental factors severely undermine the health of the community, especially children.

- *During the dry season we have a lot of dust and whirlwinds coming from the roads and open areas. To avoid the dust we seek shelter inside our huts or behind the grass fences. Some of our friends sprinkle water on the roads and around the yards to stop dust from rising.*

- *In order for us to walk through the thick mud we have to wear plastic bags up to our knees. Some of us fall down and get dirty when we go to school. The teachers send us back home to change but usually we do not return because we don't have a change of clothes.*

- *Our living conditions are good because every family has its own house. In Harare people are squeezed together and are paying monthly rentals. They are also living under the landlord's regulation and we do not like that.*

- *We hope that one day our lives will change for the better. Already toilets are being built. We hope the government will look into our situation and build for us better accommodation with electricity.*


A boy falls down in the mud on the way to school
Gerald Wiki
Age 15 years old
Dzivarasekwa

## Play and Recreation

During the research and discussions, children seemed to have problems conceptualizing the idea of play. This was perceived by many as a luxury they could not afford. They could not imagine why children of their age, for example, would want toys. Many laughed at the idea of owning such things. On the issue of recreation, the children felt that this was a privilege rather than a right. The girls tended to define their needs in terms of the boys. Instead of saying they wanted a netball pitch, they also lobbied for soccer facilities. While boys included football, swimming and playing cards as part of their daily activities very few girls indicated any time for recreation.

- *How can I think of toys when I don't even have money to buy the next meal or money for my school fees for next term? It is not that important to me to have toys or a recreational place. In fact, I have more important needs, like where my next meal is coming from.*

- *If I ask for a toy at my age, I will be told off.*

- *If I ask for a toy and get it, I will not be given breakfast for some time to compensate for the money spent on the toy.*

- *Yes, I have a toy car made out of old cans and bits of wire. These toys are easy to make. The one I have, I made myself.*

- *It would be nice if we could have a soccer pitch, a swimming pool and so on. I suppose we could also have a fish pond for us to go and look at the fish just like they do in town. But more important than these is our need for a secondary school. The nearest one is too far to walk.*

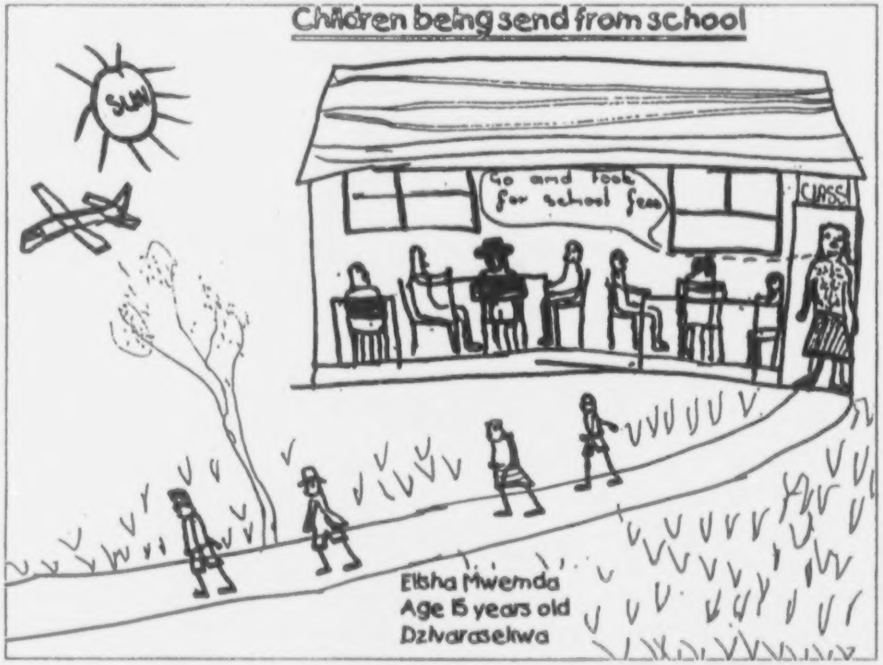
# EDUCATION

## Access

Article 28 of the CRC recognizes the right of every child to education and obliges governments to provide universal and free access to primary schooling as well as to strongly encourage the provision of secondary education facilities. Despite this obligation over 50% of children of primary school age in these communities are not attending school, a figure which increases substantially for those eligible to attend secondary level education. Lack of facilities, inability to pay school fees, poverty which forces children to work, lack of parental interest and support, the failure to procure necessary documentation, distances to the nearest secondary schools, discrimination by gender, disability and economic status are factors which deprive children of this basic right.

- *We are too many while the classes are too few to accommodate all of us. This forces us to have classes outside and under the trees, or to attend other schools. The nearest is twelve kilometres away.*

- *At times we are also forced to attend school in the afternoon when it will be too hot.*


Children being send from school
SUN
Go and look for school fees
CLASS
Elisha Mwenda
Age 15 years old
Dzivarasekwa

## CASE STUDY

### The Importance of Education

*My name is Abigail. I am fourteen years old. I am the sixth born in a family of eight children. My parents were originally from Mozambique but I have never been there. In fact, I was born in Zimbabwe.*

*We used to live at Sanganayi Inn, just near Porta Farm. At that time, we lived with a lot of people. These were people who had approached my father looking for accommodation, because they were poor and had nowhere else to live. So, my father allowed them to come and live with us. It was one of these people that raped my older sister, resulting in her pregnancy and in the birth of a child. That was some years ago. It is painful what people can do to someone who is kind to them. Recently she moved to Mtoko with another man but they are not formally married. My other sister also has a child from a married man who lied to her that he was single. My third sister fell pregnant from someone she hardly knows. So my parents have three grandchildren.*

*My sisters studied up to Grade Seven, and Forms Two and Four. They stopped* ➜

*going to school because my father did not have money for school fees. When he eventually got the money, they were all pregnant and so they could not go back to school. My brothers are younger than I am, and so they are in primary school.*

*I am in Grade Seven. I am studying maths, content, Shona and English. Content includes things such as religious studies, drawing and nature studies. I find English a little difficult but my favourite subject is maths. I know there are a lot of things that I can do if I master mathematics. For example, I can work as a till operator once I know how to divide and subtract. Maths is therefore a very relevant subject. This means that what we are taught here is quite useful, but it could be more useful. I mean in other schools, children are taught computers, woodwork and sewing. We are not taught those things here. This limits our chances, in terms of what we can do and be later on in life. I wish we had those subjects because most of what we have is not practical.*

*Often, my parents do not have money to pay for my fees. So sometimes I come to school on credit, on the understanding that the fees will be paid once the money is available. So I do what I can to raise fees. Once I went to plough a maize* ☞

- *At our school in Dzivarasekwa Extension we sometimes sit on the floor because we do not have enough chairs and desks. We are also sharing one text book among ten of us and this discourages us from studying.*

- *In Dzivarasekwa Extension we have a study group for early secondary education. We have to attend school in the afternoon because teachers are not enough. The same teachers who are teaching primary school in the morning are the same ones who teach us in the afternoon. We wish for our own secondary school.*

- *We have to work to raise money for school fees in order for us to attend school. We go to work in the farms during the weekend and holidays so that we can get some money. Some of our friends absent themselves from school because they have to work during school days as well.*

- *I have to work hard at home before I can attend school. Some of the work I do is really heavy and hard for my age. I then go to school tired and go back home to do more work after classes. At times my stepmother does not give me food when I come home. I have very little time to do homework. By the end of the day all I want to do is to sleep and rest.*

- *I experience the problem of my mother telling me not to attend school so that I can help with household chores.*

- *We do not like the Gure dance because being involved with it means we have to drop out of school. We also do not like the abusive behaviour and noise of the dancers. This disturbs us from studies.*

- *Parents prefer to send us (boys) to school rather than our sisters. They believe that we will definitely get employed. Our sisters have little chance of attending school especially when there are financial difficulties. Our parents believe that our sisters will benefit the families they will marry into rather than our own, so they do not want to invest in their education.*

- *I am a disabled boy of sixteen. I get special attention from my teacher. But sometimes my schoolmates treat me roughly because they know that I cannot fight back. In the social setting I do not like to be treated differently from other children.*

- *My parents tell me almost every day about the importance of reading and passing my exams. But when I am at school, I forget what they say. In fact, it just goes out of my head. Sometimes, when I am in class, I will be thinking about*

> *food. Especially on days where I leave home without eating anything. If I am given a little bit of money to spend at school, I become very excited and just wish for break-time so that I can spend it.*

## Quality and Relevance

Not only does the CRC recognize the obligation of states to provide universal and free education, it also stipulates that this education needs

> *"to develop the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential".*

Children in these communities have several observations to make as to whether the education they have received has been adequate and relevant to their future needs. Despite the commendable efforts of teachers in both communities, and the input of some NGOs, much remains to be done. Poor infrastructure and no recreational space, lack of teaching materials, inadequately trained teachers, the unregistered status of primary schools, an unsuitable environment for home study, no opportunities for vocational training, a limited and often irrelevant curriculum place in question the value of the service that children receive.

- *We have no water to drink at school. This forces us to run home even if this is during the lessons. We also have a problem with toilets. Our classes are too small for us, such that we end up squeezed together. We are 63 in our class, 42 boys and 21 girls.*

- *The theoretical subjects I was doing at school can assist me if I proceed with my education and pass my 'O' levels. But I will only have a chance of securing employment if I pass those exams. If I leave school before then, without any practical subjects, it will be impossible to procure a job.*

- *We are growing vegetables and maize as part of our lessons in agriculture. We do this activity after class and we grow up with knowledge about the subject. We also like this activity because we are given vegetables to take home at times. Unfortunately, some of our friends are not interested in this extra curricular activity. They see agriculture as a form of punishment by the teachers.*

- *I think that we perform better than boys. This is because we are more attentive to our teachers and behave better than them. Boys tend to be mischievous, inattentive and do not respect teachers. The older boys engage in beer drinking, smoking and bullying*

*field near here. I remember ploughing this field for more than one week before finishing it and being given $200. That was in 1998. The other time I did the same work in another field and was paid $120. Doing this type of work is difficult, but I will do it again if this is what will keep me in school. I have to finish schooling, at least up to Form Four.*

*I do not have any specific ambition or want to be anything particular in my life. I would just like to work in an office and make enough money to look after my mother, father, brothers and sisters. Once I start working, I will buy them food, clothes, blankets and other things they need. I would also like to help people in my community. There are many people who have nowhere to go and nothing to eat. I know that these days, there are many people being thrown out of their homes because they cannot pay their rent. I would like to help such people.*

*There are 35 people in my class. I came sixth in my class which means only five other people did better than me. You know what? I am determined to be number one in my class. Being a bright girl makes the boys try harder. I know people say a lot of things about intelligent girls, for example, they are like men, but I do not care.* ☛

*Here at Dzivarasekwa Extension, no one teases others about being intelligent because we all know that we should do well in school so that we can improve our lives.*

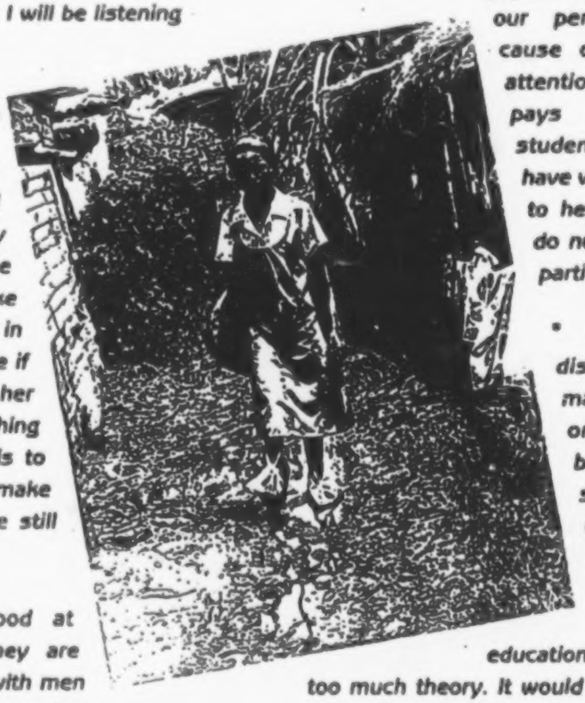
*My parents value my education so they help me with my homework. My father is talented because he is multi-lingual. He can speak Portuguese, Ndebele, Sotho, English and other languages fluently. I would like to be like him so that I can communicate with anyone. Recently, my father was involved in an accident and both his legs were injured so he cannot go to work. Now, it is as if the family is looking up to me to assist them once I finish schooling. My father used to work as a security guard while my mother works on the farm, watering and weeding flowers. Education is very important. If you are not educated you will not get a job. But if you go to school and are exposed to a lot of things, you also meet a lot of people who may be able to assist you later in life.*

*other students. After a drinking spree some children occasionally beat up teachers.*

- *If I am hungry, I cannot concentrate as I will be thinking of food. I will be listening to my stomach.*

- *Sometimes my parents argue and fight in the evening. I do not sleep well because I will be scared that my mother will leave. So the next day in class, I make sure that I sit near a hole in the wall so that I can see if my mother has packed her bags and left. The first thing I do when I get home is to check the wardrobe to make sure that her things are still there.*

- *Girls are very good at primary school, but they are disturbed by going out with men when they are in secondary school. The performance of all of us is affected by lack of study time. It is not easy to study where we are living because of noise being made within the homes that are too close together and from the beer halls nearby.*



- *We are not performing as well as we can because we have inadequate text-books, school facilities and teachers and, for example, in our class we have over 50 pupils. This is affecting our performance because of the lack of attention a teacher pays to individual students. Teachers have very limited time to help us when we do not understand a particular topic.*

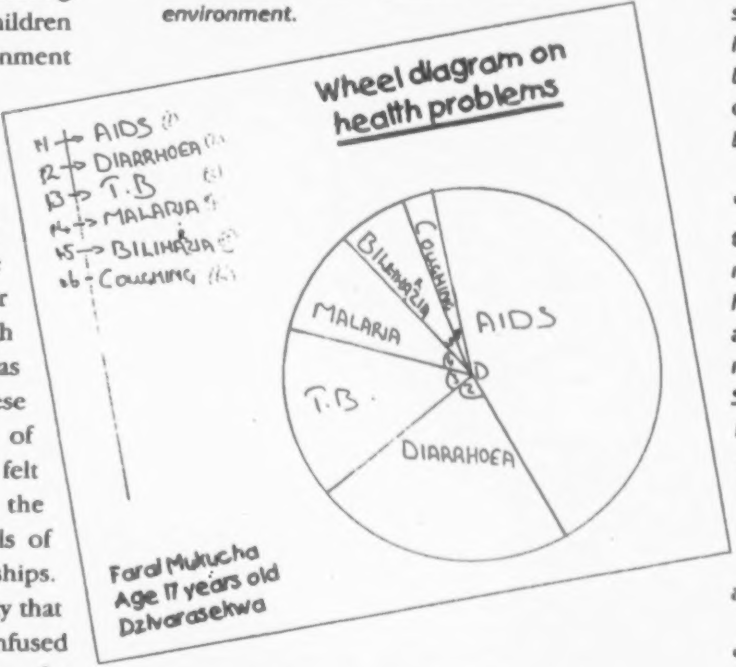
- *Although I am disabled I can make it to school on my own because our school is very close. The only problem is that we do not have practical education here. There is too much theory. It would be better if we also had subjects such as fashion and fabrics, computer programming and woodwork because if you are able to do practical work in school you can use these subjects later on in life. Subjects that are too theoretical are a problem. For example, it is difficult to get a job from doing theoretical subjects at 'O' level.*

# HEALTH

## Problems And Their Causes

The research conducted with children revealed considerable knowledge about the range and causes of health problems affecting themselves and their families. Many children were aware of the links between environment and health and attributed the high incidence of diarrhoea in the community to inadequate sanitation, poor hygiene and polluted water. Acute respiratory infections, due to poor living conditions and inadequate home ventilation, were listed as a major problem for younger children. A high incidence of malaria and bilharzia was noted. Children understood that these diseases were a direct consequence of their living environment. HIV/AIDS was felt to be particularly prevalent in the communities, partly due to high levels of mobility, migration and economic hardships. Prostitution was also noted as an activity that spreads AIDS. However, there were confused perceptions among children as to how the virus was transmitted, indicating a major need for education.

- *Some diseases have always been within our community in Dzivarasekwa Extension. Diarrhoea is common and is caused by eating dirty food. We also suffer from coughing caused by dust, and wet conditions. Some of us suffer from headaches after being in the sun for a long time and from stomach pains after eating unwashed food, food which is too sweet and from the general dirty environment.*



- *HIV/AIDS is a disease caused by sleeping with many partners. It also affects a child. If the mother is positive while she is pregnant, the child will also be positive. If you marry someone who is positive, you will also be affected. A girl who goes out with men, and a boy who goes out with girls, also gets affected. It is really a very bad and dangerous disease.*

- *When a person suddenly loses weight, has a balding head and is always sick, he can die because he will have AIDS. Sometimes we think it is AIDS, but someone might have bewitched him. We have witches in this community who can bewitch a person until he becomes mad, or until he dies. We are afraid of witchcraft because it also kills people, just like AIDS.*

- *When some of our friends are raped, the rapist does not use protective measures. As a result, this puts them at high risk of infection. Some of our friends also practise prostitution because they need to get quick money to use at school. Some are being forced into prostitution by hungry parents and stepmothers. Very few do it for enjoyment.*

- *HIV/AIDS is an incurable disease caused by prostitutes. It only affects adults and not children.*

- *Open pits which are later used as pits for rubbish in our community, are putting us at high risk of contracting malaria as they harbour mosquitoes. We are getting infected after being bitten by mosquitoes from those pits.*

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## CASE STUDY

### Catherine's Story

*My name is Catherine. I am 15 years old. I am the last born in a family of five children, three girls and two boys. My two sisters are married. One of my brothers works as a teacher while the other one is in Form Four. My mother is a health worker here, at Porta Farm.*

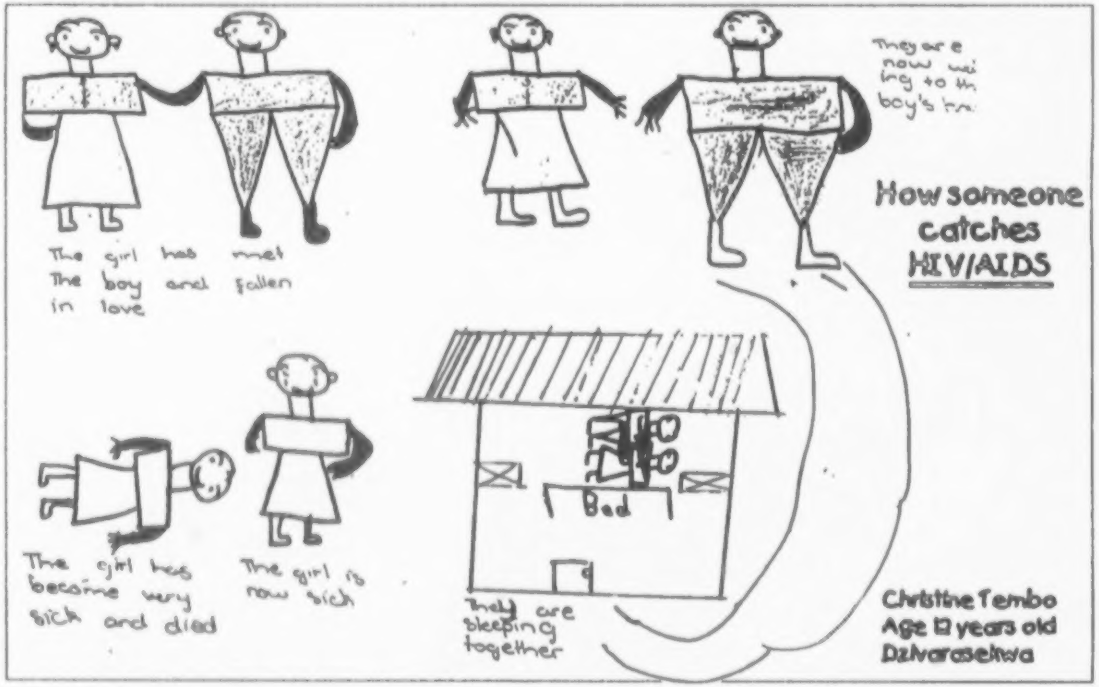
*I understand Child Rights as children having rights to such things as proper education, schooling and to freedom of expression. I think I have the right to express my views on where I go to school and which school I attend. Sometimes this is not practical though, because my parents will not have the money. So, while a child may claim a right, it is not always easy to exercise it because of limited money. I can give an example. I go to school in Darwendale. I am doing Form One there. I am one of the 70 children at that school who work for my fees. Let me tell you a bit about this:*

*A commercial farmer owns the school. The main crop grown there is tobacco. As "work-for-fees" students, we actually work in the tobacco fields and in the barns. In return, we get schooling.* ☞

- *The long grass, dense vegetation and poor drainage make us suffer from malaria during the rainy season, because that is where mosquitoes breed. Lack of hygienic conditions, smelly and dirty toilets also make us suffer from malaria as we go into the toilets without shoes.*

- *Most of us suffer from bilharzia because we like going to Murder, a place where we can swim and fight. This place is only known to us boys and we do not allow girls there because we swim naked. Our parents always advise us not to swim in that pond, but we do not listen because we like to swim there and there is nowhere else.*

- *A number of us suffer from malnutrition as a result of lack of food. Taking food once a day does not provide enough nutrients required by our bodies and makes us suffer from Kwashiorkor. In our community there are more than one hundred children suffering from malnutrition. Some infants and children have died as a result of lack of food.*


The girl has met The boy and fallen in love
They are now wai ing to th boy's
Bed
They are sleeping together
The girl is now sick
The girl has become very sick and died

**How someone catches HIV/AIDS**

Christine Tembo
Age 12 years old
Dzivarasekwa

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- *We eat sadza once a day. We usually eat sadza only, without relish. On pay days we can eat sadza with meat or milk. Mid-month, because of inadequate income, our parents can only afford green vegetables which we eat without oil, or sometimes not at all. We also occasionally eat fish during the rainy season and when it is hot. When it is cold the fish are difficult to catch.*

- *Cholera is caused by eating dumped food, unwashed food and by eating dirty sweets, that someone else would have eaten and then thrown away, without washing them. These sweets are found on dumps, by the roadside, anywhere really.*

- *We must cover our food to protect us from diseases carried by flies. We must cover open ground or holes with stagnant water, and so prevent mosquitoes from breeding.*

## Access To And Quality Of Services

Article 24 of the CRC recognizes the right of every child to the highest level of health possible, and access to medical care. The environmental conditions prevalent in these communities, however, undermines any attempts to provide curative services. While efforts have been made to introduce basic medical facilities, such efforts remain inadequate. Partly in response to this deficiency, as well as for social and cultural reasons, most residents seek alternative health care providers. Children claimed that most people frequent herbalists, prophets and traditional healers.

- *In Dzivarasekwa Extension the nearest clinic is one and a half kilometres from the settlement, although during the rainy season when the river is flooded it is a walk of seven kilometres. We also go to Alpha which is four kilometres away. We prefer to go to Alpha because we get free treatment there. Sick people are transported to the clinic in wheelbarrows, on bicycles and on the backs of adults. Those with money to hire Emergency Taxis do so, but people rarely use ambulances.*

- *In Porta Farm when we fall sick, we go to Norton clinic which is about ten kilometres away. We are transported in wheelbarrows or we have to use Emergency Taxis. It is very difficult to get transport at night and only those who can afford to hire a car do so. Some owners of cars in the community make us work at various chores at a later date in order to pay for the transport we have used to get to hospital.*

- *When we go to the clinic we pay $40. We find this very expensive and therefore*

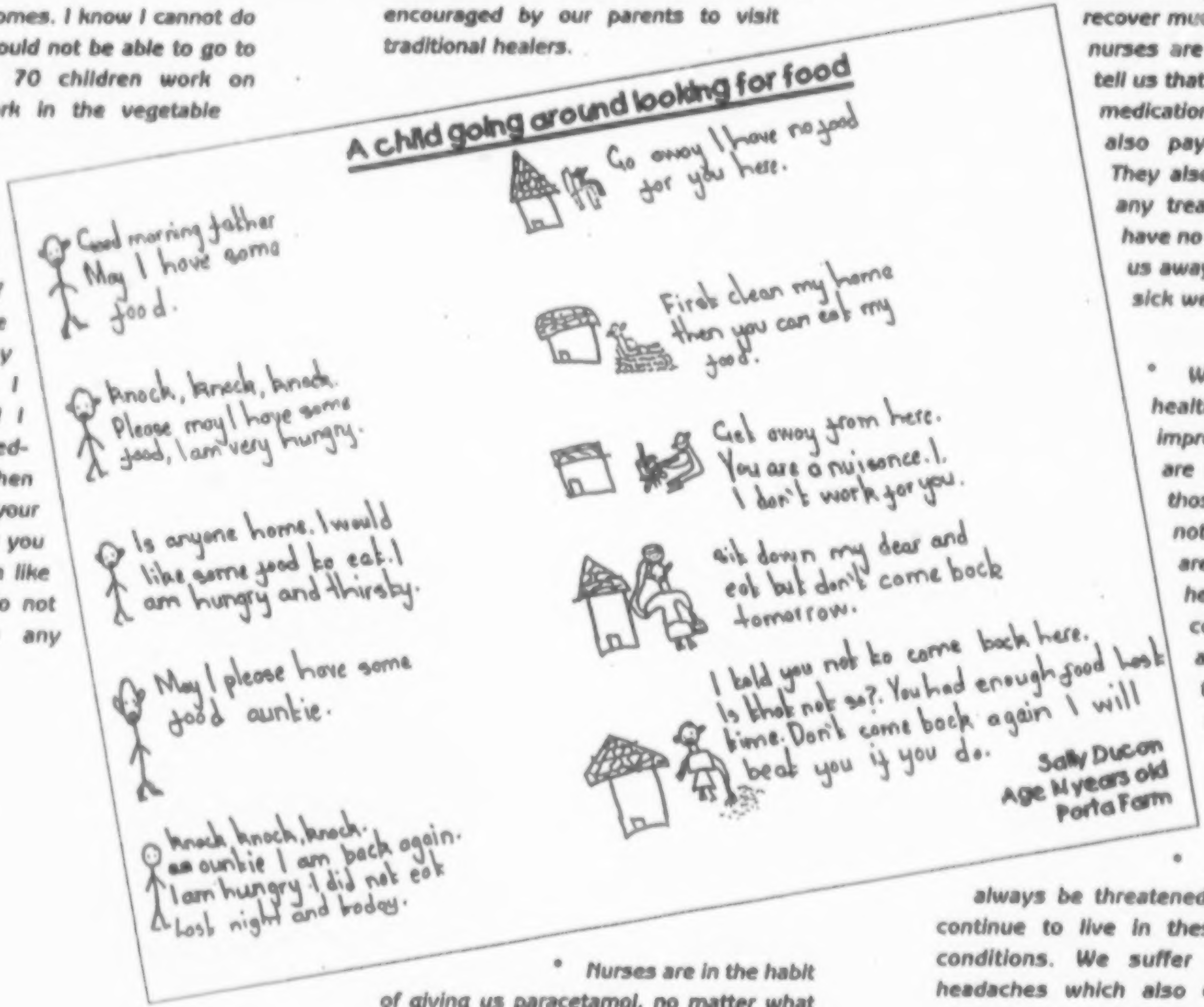
*The school has a hot-seating system, which means that children go to school at different times. Some go in the morning and others in the afternoon at 1.30 pm. If you start school in the morning that week then you will start work at 1.30pm. If your class starts at 1.30pm, you work in the morning and if you do not meet your target, you stay at work until you finish. This means you can miss the whole week of schooling, as you will be working. Most of the time we work into the evening.*

*There are two main activities; picking tobacco in the fields and sorting it in the barn. When picking tobacco, you are given 120 wires for that day. You are expected to break the tobacco leaves from the stem and attach them to the wire. These leaves are then put in the barn to burn. The wire is removed. You have to complete your target before leaving the workplace. Otherwise you do not leave.*

*Working in the barn is really tough. You inhale a lot of tobacco and end up with a headache. Many of the children who work in the barn often complain of headache. When tobacco is dry, it causes 'flu. One day, we went and complained to the foreman. We were tired and fed up of missing classes. But he told us that if we did not want to work, we could always* *go back to our homes. I know I cannot do that because I would not be able to go to school. Not all 70 children work on tobacco. 30 work in the vegetable garden.*

*I really hate living and going to school there. I miss a lot of classes and the only reason I stay on is because I love school and I want to get educated. How then can you express your child rights when you are in a situation like mine, where I do not seem to have any choices?*

*do not like to fall sick. Most of us are then encouraged by our parents to visit traditional healers.*


A child going around looking for food
Good morning father May I have some food.
Go away I have no food for you here.
Knock, knock, knock. Please may I have some food, I am very hungry.
First clean my home then you can eat my food.
Is anyone home. I would like some food to eat. I am hungry and thirsty.
Get away from here. You are a nuisance. I. I don't work for you.
Sit down my dear and eat but don't come back tomorrow.
May I please have some food auntie.
I told you not to come back here. Is that not so?. You had enough food last time. Don't come back again I will beat you if you do.
Knock knock, knock. an auntie I am back again. I am hungry I did not eat last night and today.
Sally Ducon
Age 11 years old
Porta Farm

- *Nurses are in the habit of giving us paracetamol, no matter what illness we are suffering. We want to be given injections because we know that after an injection we will recover much quicker. Some nurses are rude to us and tell us that if we need more medication then we should also pay more money. They also do not give us any treatment when we have no money and send us away, no matter how sick we are.*

- *We feel that our health cannot be improved if the toilets are not washed and those filled up are not drained. They are worsening the health within our community. We also need more toilets and assistance in how to maintain them.*

- *Our health will always be threatened as long as we continue to live in these overcrowded conditions. We suffer from constant headaches which also come from our daily problems and stress in our lives.*

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- *Our living conditions are not good. Community Health Workers are no longer operating well. They are just putting up posters to advise us that we should not throw rubbish everywhere. They used to assist us a lot, giving us tablets when we were sick. Now we have to go all the way to Norton clinic for treatment. Sometimes they give us referral letters so that we can get free treatment at the clinic.*

- *Our toilets smell because we have no chemicals. Imagine yourself staying in such conditions where you can't breathe in fresh air. We also like a clean place, not to see rubbish everywhere. We pick up litter at times, around the school and our homes, but this does not really help the situation. It seems to get worse every day.*

- *We consult traditional healers and prophets because we do not have enough money to pay hospital fees and transport charges. At the traditional healer or prophet we pay after we are feeling better and we can pay in instalments. We go to see these healers for any illnesses.*

- *Those of us who do not want to take herbs consult prophets. We are given blessed water as treatment. Prophets tell us that all that was created by God is not difficult to cure because God supports them in their work. The prophets claim that they can cure AIDS.*

- *In the Apostolic Church we don't pay health fees because we don't go to hospital when we fall sick. Our church does not allow us to go to hospital or traditional healers. Jesus never went to hospital so why should we?*

## ECONOMIC ISSUES

### Poverty And Survival

The children in their research, identified three different classes of people who reside in their communities. The first and by far the largest group (over 80%) were categorized as poor. This section of the population generally lives in pole and dagga huts or plastic shacks, lack formal employment, cannot afford to pay school fees and generally involve children in contributing to family income. The modal group (15%) generally own resources such as bicycles and have access to regular or formal employment. The "rich" minority (5%) generally live in houses built of brick, employ other people in different activities, own tuckshops and other facilities in the community, have television and radios and easily pay school fees. For children from the first group, poverty is a constant fact of life. Many complain of hunger, their lack of security and shelter, the absence of opportunities that other children experience

## CASE STUDY

### A Grandmother's Story

*I am Mbuya Maria White. I was born in Chimoi, Mozambique in 1930. My husband and I moved to Zimbabwe a long time ago. I cannot remember the exact year. We were living in Epworth, Harare, until 1991 when the government moved us to Porta Farm.*

*We had one child, a girl. She was born in 1972. When she was 15 years old, she gave birth to Thomas. Thomas' father refused to accept any responsibility for him. He did not pay the traditional "damage" that would have given him responsibility over Thomas. That meant that I had to buy maternity dresses and other clothes that she needed. I lived with Thomas and his mother from the time he was two years old. His mother died in 1998. His father had died in 1995 and a brother born to Thomas died some time after that. He was three years old.*

*I have been looking after Thomas since 1998. It has not been easy, trying to raise money for him to go to school. He did well in Grade Seven and managed to get a place at a secondary school in Norton,* ➡

*a town about ten kilometres away from Porta Farm. I approached the Department of Social Welfare. They said they did not have funds. Thomas' head teacher then advised us to see a Roman Catholic priest in Harare who gave me money to pay for one term of fees.*

*I was very thankful when the priest paid Thomas' school fees for the first term. This meant that all I had to worry about was the $6 needed daily for transport to school. I raise that money selling tomatoes and vegetables. Thomas also does some small things to raise money. For example, he goes to the mountain to look for fuelwood that sells. My worry now is where I will get school fees for Thomas next term.*

*Getting food is another problem. We eat two meals a day. At breakfast we eat porridge or bread with tea. The next meal is in the evening when we eat sadza. The Anglican Church in Harare used to give us 5kg of mealie-meal, a packet of dried fish and a bar of soap each month. These days, they only give us the mealie-meal. At least we have a vegetable garden so we depend on that a lot.*

*Thomas and I are desperate for money to buy food and clothing, but I will never allow him to sell mbanje to make*

and their vulnerability to abuse and deprivation that comes with their low economic status.

- *In our community the number of rich people is very small. Most of us are poor with a few in the middle group. The houses that we live in are made out of pole and dagga. We also build houses out of bricks that have not been fired, and these fall down during the rainy season. We generally have a meal once a day, but there are times when we don't eat anything. Some of us are not able to go to school or visit relatives because our clothes are tattered.*

- *The people from the middle group have access to fish, because they have nets. They sell tomatoes and vegetables. Their houses are better and they can resist the rain. A few of them are employed in the nearest farms.*

- *The rich have good houses and own tuckshops, which are fully stocked. A few individuals own second-hand cars which we can hire when we are sick during the night.*

- *We are not able to buy enough food with the little money we generate from selling bricks, firewood and other small items, because things are now very expensive in the shops. All the things we sell are sold within our community where everyone is suffering. We are then forced to sell at very low prices. Most of us end up dropping out of school or absenting ourselves in order to fully engage in piece-work, moulding bricks, vending and collecting firewood. There is a good number of us that run away from our community to Harare to become street kids. We face a lot of problems during the dry season because there will not be much work to do on the farms. This makes our situation worse. Some girls practice prostitution and get married early to run away from starving at home.*

- *I go to work on the farms hungry. Sometimes I am given food while I am working. This food will be payment for my labour. Although I would like to work on a full stomach, it pains me at the end of the month when I do not receive any income. I had to learn the hard way, that it is better to work hungry and to get money at the end of the month, than to get food. This food is only being given to me while I am working and I have none to take for my family. During the month I am always hungry with little food to eat, but still have to work hard. I like the end of the month because I can afford to eat at least two meals a day with my family.*

- *The suffering we face on a daily basis forces some of my friends to steal other people's property and to sell it in order to get money to buy food. We now have a reduced number of water points within our community because some people are stealing the heads of the taps and selling them.*

- *The freedom to build houses anywhere one likes makes it hard to have proper control and security. The fact that people continue to move to Porta Farm from all over makes it difficult to leave out these people with bad intentions. Porta Farm is open to anyone, even thieves. This puts our belongings at risk.*

- *We have little time to enjoy ourselves in our community, doing what we like as children, because during the rainy season we are busy repairing falling houses and in winter we are busy looking for firewood because we suffer from the cold. Lack of a permanent place and poor income force us to live in such terrible conditions. Our parents cannot afford to build better houses because they also have to pay for our food, school and other basics.*

- *Our parents are willing to assist in building a proper school but are not settled. They always tell us we will be leaving very soon but are not sure when. They were promised better homes eight years ago. They are willing to provide available local resources, like moulded bricks, but they don't have money to buy other material. Our parents managed to build toilets at school with some outside help.*

- *Lack of fees prevents us from attending other schools where children from better areas learn. This means that we are shy when we meet up with other children during sports competitions. There are a lot of games we don't compete in because we have no sports kit. Our poor and tattered clothes also make us too embarrassed to mix with them. For us to compete with other schools we depend on well wishers for assistance with transport.*

*money. For me, I feel it is better to go hungry than to let a child trade in mbanje. It is not correct. We have seen a lot of children who sell mbanje. They end up smoking it and after a while, they go mad. I always tell Thomas that going to school on a full stomach does not mean you will do well at school. Instead, anyone who is determined can do well.*

*My greatest fear is that Thomas will fall sick and I will not have the money to pay for his treatment at the hospital. I really wish we did not have to pay for hospital treatment. After all, the care we are getting nowadays is not the same as long back when nurses and doctors really cared about the sick. Sometimes, doctors and nurses can leave a very sick person to die while waiting to be treated. That never used to happen as the doctors would always try to treat the sickest people first.*

*My other worry is whether he will be able to avoid getting HIV/AIDS. When we were still young, sexually transmitted diseases could be treated, but why not now? So, I try and educate him to avoid behaviour that can make him get HIV/AIDS.*

*Thomas loves school. In fact, whenever I manage to get a few cents together I give him money to buy a freezit (local frozen drinks). But instead of buying a* ☛

freezit, Thomas saves money for school fees or bus fares.

He does other things to raise money. Before his mother died, she bought mbira, an animal that is found in the mountains. He collects these and sells a male and female mbira together for $50.

I always try and make Thomas look to the future and guide him to be a well-mannered, respectful, and respected person. For example, I tell him "If someone insults you, ignore him. But remember your goal in life. Look at President Mugabe. He came from a humble home but look where he is now".

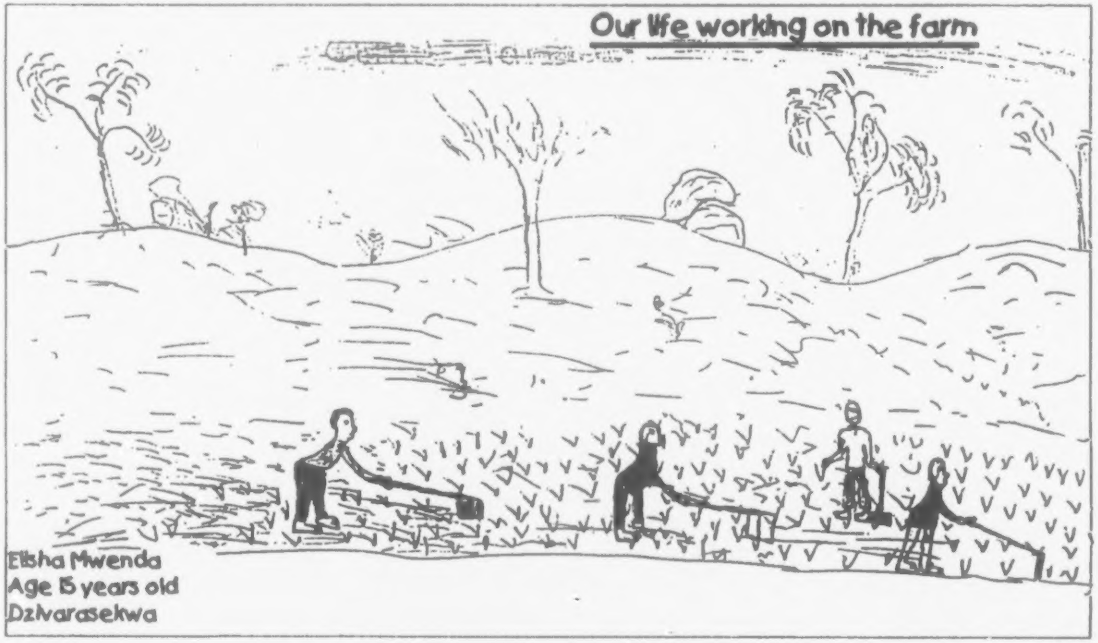
I tell him not to insult mad people. Many of those people look mad, but they are not. In fact, they have been driven into that condition by hunger and poverty. So, never laugh at a poor person.

Thomas is a wonderful boy. He has replaced his mother's position as my child. We are the only two people left together, as my husband died many years ago and the rest of my relatives are in Mozambique. I also enjoy his company because I have someone to send on errands. Thomas comforts me at times.

- This is very sad for us to admit, but some of our friends have turned to prostitution as a way of earning quick money. They also break into people's houses to steal things. Some children who have been caught stealing have been beaten and asked why they do it. They said that they are in desperate need of money to buy food for themselves and their families. They also claim that their parents do not know that they get money in that way. It is punishment enough for us to be reported to our parents. A few children caught in the act have been reported to the police. They have been beaten and returned home with strong warnings. Begging on the streets is usually the last resort for us. We have returned to Porta Farm after trying that life.

## Child Labour

*"State Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or*



> *to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development". (Article 32, CRC).*

The research revealed that labour is a significant feature of children's lives in these communities and comprises activities such as vending, agricultural work on nearby farms, fishing, fuel wood collection, gold panning and domestic chores. While children are concerned that these activities can compromise their rights to health and education, they were also clear that in the absence of external financial support, their contribution to the family is necessary for survival. Nevertheless children complained that their labour was often not rewarded by parental support for their education and that in some cases stepparents would appropriate this money for their own use or for the children they had brought with them from a previous marriage. (Case study page 29)

- *Most of us in this community go to the nearby farms to work in order to raise money to contribute to our families and to pay for school fees. We are not paid until we finish a particular job. If you are lazy and take five days to complete one day's work, your money will not increase and you will be paid the same amount as those who take only one day.*

- *We don't mind working. We like to do work at home because it's part of our learning, as long as its not too heavy. We do not like to work on the farms because we have the same amount to do as adults. We are also unfairly paid. Only Z$30 per area, even if it takes us more than a day. The farm supervisors are hard on us but we can't complain because we will be asked to leave. We do not want to stop. We have no other choice but to continue. Farm work makes us tired the whole time.*

- *Vending is an activity we are all engaged in. We even think about it when we are in class, that after school today we will fish and then sell them. This activity has made some of us lose interest in school, in order for us to be fully engaged in generating income. Girls are also fishing now, and we are all proud to contribute the fish we catch as food for our families.*

- *In the farms we are mainly involved in weeding, digging, planting, ploughing and harvesting. We are not using any chemicals as yet. The adults are the ones who have used them so far.*

- *Some of us give our parents money when we get paid. Some of my friends buy clothes and other items they need. The orphans give what they have to people they live with. Some of our friends who*

## CASE STUDIES

### Me and My Grandmother

*My name is Thomas. I was born in 1985, making me 14 years old. I am the only person left in my family. The first person to leave me was my father. He died in 1995. We were not very close to each other, as we did not live together. I had one brother who died some years ago when he was three years old. My mother died in 1998. I do not know what she died of.*

*I now live with mbuya, (my grandmother), my mother's mother. She has become my mother, cooking my food, washing my clothes and giving me money to go to school. In fact, I have lived with my grandmother all my life but became her responsibility last year when my own mother died.*

*I have a number of responsibilities around the house that I share with mbuya. These include tending the garden and selling the vegetables and tomatoes from there. We help each other in doing this. I am responsible for fishing and I catch quite a few big fish using green moss found by the riverside. It is very good for this. I go fishing mostly on Saturdays.*

*We also have some chickens that I tend together with mbuya. These chickens are mostly for sale. I also go and look for firewood in the mountains and sell this by the roadside or at home. I can make quite a bit of money from this but it is hard work. I carry big bundles of wood on my head all the way from the mountain to our house. Sometimes my shoulders end up hurting. Sometimes I go on my own and other times with my friend. I do all this work because I want to raise money for school.*

*I go to school in Norton. I started Form One this year. At the beginning of this term, I had no fees. I know that this is because I have no parents. If only my mother had died when I was a little older I would not have these problems. However, my grandmother managed to get some money from some church people for last term. But I do not know what we shall do for the future. No one else, except my grandmother, really supports me. My uncle (father's brother) does not help me at all even though he is better off than we are. He works and does not have a large family. I have been there, begging for school fees, and have never been given anything. In fact, they behave in a funny way towards me. When I ask for money, they tell me to come back ☛*

*live with their stepmothers are forced to give them all their money and do not get a single cent. This money goes to their own children first to buy clothes and for school fees.*

- *We are working on farms in order to get money to buy food. We also go to work to assist our parents. We like it because this is where most of us meet to share ideas. If we do not go to work we will not survive. We also get money for school fees, for clothes and for other goodies.*

- *The work which we do also prepares us for our future homes, so that we will be able to look after our children well. This also makes us realize that we should work hard in order for us to live better.*

- *There are many friends of mine who were in the same class as me. They ran away from their homes because of the harsh conditions. They are now living on the streets of Harare.*

- *We sell a lot of fish by the roadside. We like this activity because we get a lot of money from the passers-by. We are now worried because there is a rumour that a police post will be located in Porta Farm, and a wall built around our settlement. This will prevent us from doing our favourite work, because we do not have permits.*

- *We travel as far as Mazoe, some 50km away, for gold panning, and ordering oranges to sell. We go there during school holidays and weekends. Those who do not attend school go there during the week.*

## ISSUES OF VULNERABILITY

### Parenting Practice

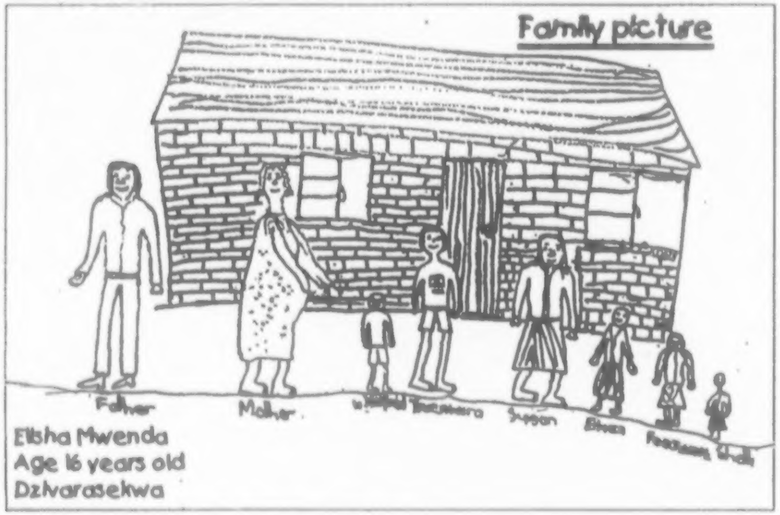
*"State parties shall use their best efforts to ensure recognition of the principle that both parents have common responsibilities for the upbringing and development of the child. Parents or, as the case may be, legal guardians have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and*

*development of the child. The best interests of the child will be their basic concern". (Article 18. Convention on the Rights of the Child).*

Economic hardship, breakdown of extended family, a high percentage of single parent and child-headed households, separation from biological parents and large family sizes, etc., create the conditions in which parental guidance, love and support for children in these communities are compromised. This in turn hinders the development of the child's evolving capacities and creates conditions in which children are forced to assume responsibilities and burdens inappropriate to their age. (Case study page 32)

- *In large families children do not go to school because their parents cannot afford to pay fees. I come from a family of 11. Three children from my uncle who died last year have come to stay with us. This makes 14 in our small hut. I have decided to leave school so that I can fish and sell them to generate income to help my family. This is better for me because we can have something to eat everyday. I do not like the fact that my mother gives us food first and then gives our cousins the left overs.*

- *My mother is working so she is the one who is looking after us. If my father was working as well, life would be so much easier for us.*



- *I stay with my grandmother. She orders vegetables for us to sell in order to get money to look after us.*

- *The place we are living in is not ours. Even if our parents had money to build houses they would not do so because they have been told that Porta Farm is only a temporary place to stay. They were told on a certain day. When I go on that day, I find no one at the house. Then when I ask them about it, they say I went to the house late.*

*Apart from my relatives, who behave in strange ways, no one has ever insulted me or said anything painful relating to my being an orphan. In fact, people around here are very supportive of me. People of Porta Farm do not really talk about my situation, probably because I have always lived with my grandmother. I feel protected as long as she is alive because she has always been there for me. When I grow up I want to be a natural scientist, studying animals and nature. I find that subject very interesting.*

## Elizabeth's Story

*My name is Elizabeth. I am sixteen years old. In my family there are five children, three girls and two boys. The two boys are working while the two younger girls are in primary school. We moved to Porta Farm in 1991. We were moved from Epworth by the government and have been living here since that time.*

*I never knew my father. My mother fell sick and died in 1998. As I was the* *oldest girl, I was expected to replace her position as mother. Now I am responsible for cooking, washing of clothes and cleaning the house. My two sisters, now aged 11 and nine years, recently started helping me with some of the work. The boys do not help me with housework, although they wash their own clothes. They also give me the bus fare to go to school at Foka College in Norton. So, before I go to school I make sure I have prepared food, either tea or porridge, for everyone to eat. I also make sure there is something to eat at night for the whole family.*

*My mother used to raise money by selling fish along the Harare-Bulwayo highway. I would like to do the same so that I can have money. However, I need start-up funding. This money will enable me to hoard fish. Once I start selling fish, I will be able to help with providing food for the family and with paying my own fees. I would like to be a nurse when I grow up. I want to help the sick and disadvantaged, people who are like me.*

*I am not yet thinking of marriage, as I am still young. But I hope my brother marries and that they will look after me. My two younger sisters have a different father to me, so I do not need to worry about them. They are planning to go to Malawi, as*

*that the government would find a better place for us to stay, after three months. This was in 1991.*

- *We are not settled here. We are always being threatened with being chased away. Our belongings are always packed if we need to move quickly. I wonder where we will go if we are chased from home. We are very sad about this and wonder what will happen to old people, who have nowhere else to go.*

- *I stay with my grandmother who treats us very well. She pays my school fees. She goes to work on the farms and sells maize in order to generate income for the family.*

- *I am staying with my mother's sister. She treats me like any other child in her family.*

- *I am staying with my relatives in Dzivarasekwa Extension. I do not think of going elsewhere. They treat me just like any other child in the family. We do the same amount of work and eat the same amount of food.*

- *I am staying with my mother who is very sick at the moment. My two brothers ran away and by now I am convinced that they are on the streets. I could not join them as I had to look after my younger sister and sick mother. I do not know where my father is and I am now forced to head the house. I have problems finding food and sometimes I get assistance from the neighbours. They have now become tired of me and are not helping any more. All I can do is cry all the time. (Porta Farm, 12-year-old girl)*

- *I am not going to school because of financial problems, as my father is unemployed. Apart from the finance problem I was forced out of school to take care of my younger sister and brother because my mother passed away in 1997. I only managed to go as far as Grade Four. I*

***spend all my time doing housework. It's not easy to look after my brother and sister. One day my brother was very sick and I did not know what to do. I just cried until someone came to help me. Life is hard for me because I have become an adult at an early age. (Porta Farm, 15-year-old girl)***

## Juvenile Justice

### Article 40 of the CRC

> *"recognizes the right of every child alleged as, accused of, or recognized as having infringed the penal law, to be treated in a manner consistent with the promotion of the child's sense of dignity and worth, which reinforces the child's respect for human rights and fundamental freedom of others and which takes into account the child's age and the desirability of promoting the child's reintegration and the child's assuming a constructive role in society"*

During the research children acknowledged that the crime rate in their communities is high. Yet they pointed out that many adults and children are forced into illegal activities due to their extreme poverty. In general the relationship between children and local authorities, especially the police, seems to be a hostile one. There is a danger that children may lose their respect for the law, as a result of the behaviour and attitudes displayed towards them. The occasional beatings and harsh treatment seemed to fuel resentment rather than respect towards a justice system which is supposed to protect them. The theme of juvenile justice provoked some of the most intense debates in the research, indicating that this was an issue the children felt strongly about.

- ***I was once arrested while fishing by the bridge at Lake Chivero. A wildlife warden arrested me. He came, blew his whistle, arrested and put me into a wildlife vehicle. My hands were tied with a rope and I was taken to the police station, where we were beaten with sticks taken from a mulberry tree.***

- ***I was once arrested for hitting someone who insulted my parents. The police took me and other offenders to a cell that was full of many other people. Adults and children were mixed together. The minute I entered some men started asking me for cigarettes in exchange for food. I had not eaten but I also told them that I did not have my cigarettes. So they just ate my food. Our cell had a toilet and I slept right next to it. It was dark and I was really scared. In the morning the guards came and we were told to eat***

***where they have relatives from their father's side. My other relatives, apart from my brothers, are in Norton.***

***I miss my mother. She used to provide me with emotional support. I had someone to talk to who was my mother. She used to give me clothes as well, which is something I am now struggling to find.***

*breakfast. This was tea and bread. The tea was sugarless and the bread was see-through. Later I was released for being underage.*

- *We were once arrested for taking sugar cane. We did not steal it but we just took it from the field where it was growing and were seen carrying it. The police chained our hands and took us to their pilot station and gave us three choices: to be beaten, to be locked up or to eat all the sugar cane (it was a big bundle). Eventually one of them made us work in his vegetable garden. That to me was abuse. I felt that he looked down on us because we were children and therefore did not have rights.*

- *The police and wildlife wardens make people do funny things. Sometimes, if the people arrested involve young and old people, they make the older people sit on the young ones. Sometimes they tell all the people caught fishing illegally to stand in pairs and to hit each other with sticks. Other times, you are made to walk on stones with your knees.*

- *I do not totally hate Porta Farm. I value it because we live here for free. The water and accommodation are free. Primary schooling is very cheap. It's only a pity that there is no secondary school. However, I am concerned about the persistent police raids. The police harass us a lot here. They say we must live further away from the road because important people pass by this road on their way to the communal areas and they must not see any dirt. The police also bring a lot of people from other places to come and live here, as they have nowhere else to go.*

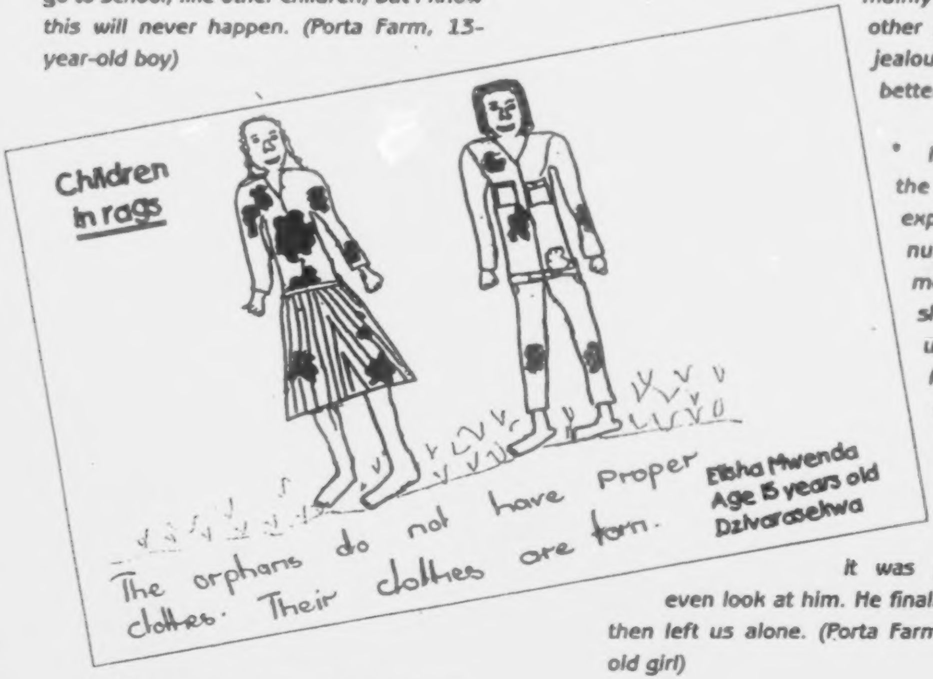
- *Sometimes children are treated differently by the police but most of the time we are treated the same. We are all handcuffed and we are all beaten.*

## Orphans

Article 20 of the CRC obliges states to provide special protection for children deprived of their family environment and ensure that appropriate alternative family care or institutional placement is made available to them. No such services are available for children who are orphaned in these communities. Research has indicated that numbers are high. 3% of the children in Dzivarasekwa Extension and 3.4% in Porta Farm are maternal orphans, 9% Dzivarasekwa Extension and 11.2% Porta Farm are paternal orphans, and 5.2% Dzivarasekwa Extension and 3.5% Porta Farm are without both parents. During research children noted the problems that orphans themselves claimed to be facing in their daily lives. These included: poor accommodation and deprived living conditions, lack of food, lack of clothes, increased responsibilities depriving them of access to education, absence of emotional support, vulnerability to abuse, community insults and beatings from caregivers. Yet children also recognized that their new caregivers, often grandparents, had themselves been placed in a difficult economic situation due to the responsibility of having to look after them. (Case study page 36)

- *Some of our friends who are orphans live in terrible conditions, either alone or with people who look after them. They provide cheap labour for some caregivers and are also being forced to continually work in the farms at the expense of their education. They have told us that when they get money it is taken away and used for other purposes than their own welfare. Their situation is worse within families where caregivers have their own children. All the benefits go to them.*

- *I stay with my caregiver under very harsh conditions. I do not mind as long as I am alive. I am treated very badly. Sometimes you cannot imagine the things I go through and the hard work I have to do. But I just stay. Where else can I go, tell me? I am not taken to the clinic when I am sick. I am told to rest for a short while and then I should work again. If I don't I will be made to sleep outside. I would also like to* *go to school, like other children, but I know this will never happen. (Porta Farm, 13-year-old boy)*


Children in rags
The orphans do not have proper clothes. Their clothes are torn.
Elisha Mwenda
Age 15 years old
Dzivarasekwa

- *From our own thinking, being an orphan is caused by the death of parents. Our friends in this situation have told us about the different ways in which their parents have died. One told us that his parents died in a car accident. Another told us that one of his parents died of natural causes. Another friend said that his mother was run down by a car. Because we live right next to a highway it is common for people to get run over. We also know that some other children's parents have died through witchcraft, mainly because other people are jealous of their better situation.*

- *I have had the terrible experience of nursing my mother when she was sick, until she died. My father was also then sick for a very long time such that it was painful to even look at him. He finally died and then left us alone. (Porta Farm, 15-year-old girl)*

- *When both parents die after a long illness it is very suspicious for us. We have been told that AIDS kills people in this way. A lot of children are being left alone or with relatives after their parents die. Other children are living with anyone who feels sorry for them. When the caregiver is tired of looking after them, he or she just abandons them to look after themselves. Some parents also abandon their own children.*

## CASE STUDY

### *Brighton's Story*

*My name is Brighton Pamusi. I am an eighteen-year-old boy. My parents came from Malawi and settled in Musana Village. We are five in our family.*

*My mother tells me that I was born a "normal child". That was until I entered Grade Five. At that time I developed problems with the muscles in my arms and legs. When these problems started, I would walk on my toes and not step flat on my feet. Eventually, I could not support my own body. That was when my legs stopped functioning. Today they rest against my stomach and chest. My disability means that I cannot stand on my own. I tried going for physiotherapy to Parirenyatwa Hospital in Harare but my parents stopped taking me there when my father became unemployed and unable to pay the fees. So I have not been able to walk since I was fifteen-years-old.*

*You cannot imagine the pain when something like this happens to you. The pain of having to be pushed around in a wheelbarrow when you want to move around. It is terrible. I love fishing but* ☛

*can no longer go because I cannot walk on my own. I suppose the least I can do is to learn to cook fish when someone else catches them.*

*I stopped going to school in Grade Five when I became disabled. That was because I had no one to bring me to school. I have a brother doing Grade Six and a sister in Grade Seven at Kintyre, a school that is near here. But even though I loved reading and writing, I have not continued because I do not have any books to read. My brother and sister are not allowed to bring books home.*

*Not being mobile is a real problem for me. I have to crawl if I want to go anywhere. Crawling is painful because the ground here is rough. Of course, it would be easier if I had a wheelchair. I then would move on my own. I crawl to places if I really need to go anywhere. Otherwise I just stay at home.*

*My family members do not really help me when I want to move around, like other people of my age. My mother helps me when I want to go to the toilet and my father bathes me. But they do not travel with me because they cannot carry me. The only time I travel is in a wheelbarrow.* ☛

- *We know of some of our friends who are living on their own because they have no one to look after them. We see that they have not enough to eat. They are bullied, insulted and beaten by some of the boys in our community. Most are not attending school. If they attend at all they are usually absent because of lack of proper clothes and a shortage of money for school fees.*

- *No one loves us. Our relatives living with us or helping us in any way do so because of a sense of duty. They do not really want to look after us. We help them a lot in terms of providing labour and giving them money.*

- *I like staying with my grandmother because she gives me all the food that I need for me to grow. She is also kind and pays my school fees. I like her very much.*

- *Some of us are assaulted for no reason. We are also told by our grandmother that "I am not the one who killed your parents". She is currently taking care of us. We are also told that if we were spoiled by being spoon-fed by our parents that we should learn that the situation has now changed. (Dzivarasekwa Extension, 12-year-old boy).*

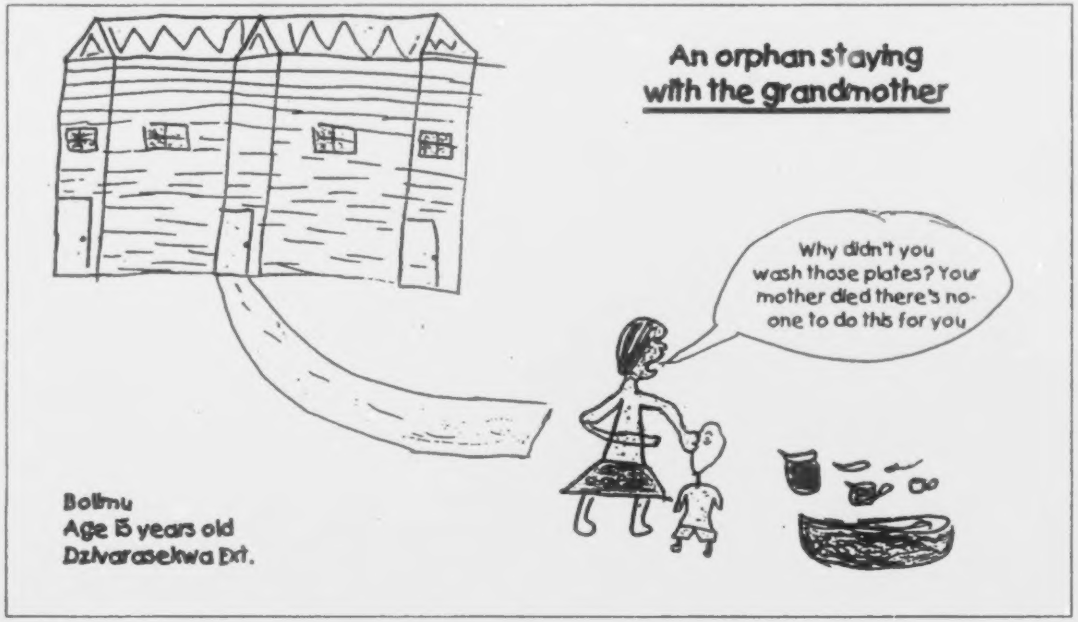
- *Men come to some of us, pretending that they want to take care of us. But they end up forcing us to have sex with them as they claim that they have spent a lot of money on us. We cannot tell other people because we are afraid of being blamed. (Porta Farm, 14-year-old girl)*

## Step Children

The communities in Porta Farm and Dzivarasekwa Extension are characterized by high levels of divorce and second or third marriages. This has meant that many children now live with one biological parent and a stepfather or stepmother. During the research, many children claimed that this situation was a major factor behind child abuse and listed the following problems that children face within such families: food deprivation arising from preferential treatment for the biological children of the step-parent, denial of opportunity to attend school for similar reasons, increased domestic and economic responsibilities, vulnerability to physical and sexual abuse by step-parents, increased instances of forced and early marriages and lack of emotional support and parental attention. It needs to be noted that the relationship between a child and step-parent can be coloured by intense emotional resentments and this may influence perceptions. Nevertheless, the prevalence of complaints and concern expressed by children on this issue would indicate that there is a problem here that needs to be addressed through family counselling, parental training and protection where necessary.

- *We are forced to go to work on farms. The money we get is taken away by our stepmothers. What pains us is that sometimes we are not given food and are expected to go back to work the following day. If we complain that we are not feeling well, they do not listen. They say that we are lazy. We are given more work at home after working hard at farms. Our stepmother's children go to school, while we do work. We are always under pressure from our stepmothers.*

- *We are physically and mentally abused by our stepmothers. They always accuse us of something we have not done. If anything is missing at home, we are always blamed. Some of us girls are given men, whom we do not want. They disregard our age and we do not have a choice but to be married because our step mothers would already have received lobola (bride price). If the men we are given become broke, the stepmothers*


An orphan staying with the grandmother
Why didn't you wash those plates? Your mother died there's no-one to do this for you
Bollmu
Age 15 years old
Dzivarasekwa Ext.

*Some people in the community laugh at me. They point a finger and laugh at me because I cannot walk. It hurts me a lot but I just keep quiet because I cannot defend myself. Deep down, however, I tell them that one day they will have a child like me. I would like the community to understand my situation. I would like them to understand and help me when I want to walk. I would like a wheelchair so that I can move around on my own and play games such as soccer.*

*I have learnt to use my hands. I fix watches. I was not trained by anyone but I just learnt to do it. In fact, I just love fixing things, but the problem here is that there is nothing to fix. When I grow up, I would like to be a mechanic and fix radios. I am very good with my hands. I enjoy working for myself, to the extent that I would not like to work for anyone. Working for other people opens you up to abuse and ill-treatment. I have not told my parents what I want to do but I am sure they would help me once I tell them.*

*I have friends, but they are mostly younger than I am. I prefer to play with younger children, because the older ones beat me. They say nasty things to me and when I respond in an equally nasty way, they beat me. They also hit me because they know I cannot hit back. I hate* *playing with younger people but I have no choice.*

*I would really like to go to school. That is where other people of my age are and that is where I can get an education and eventually do something with my life.*

*usually look for another man with money. Some children are abused by stepfathers while their mothers are away.*

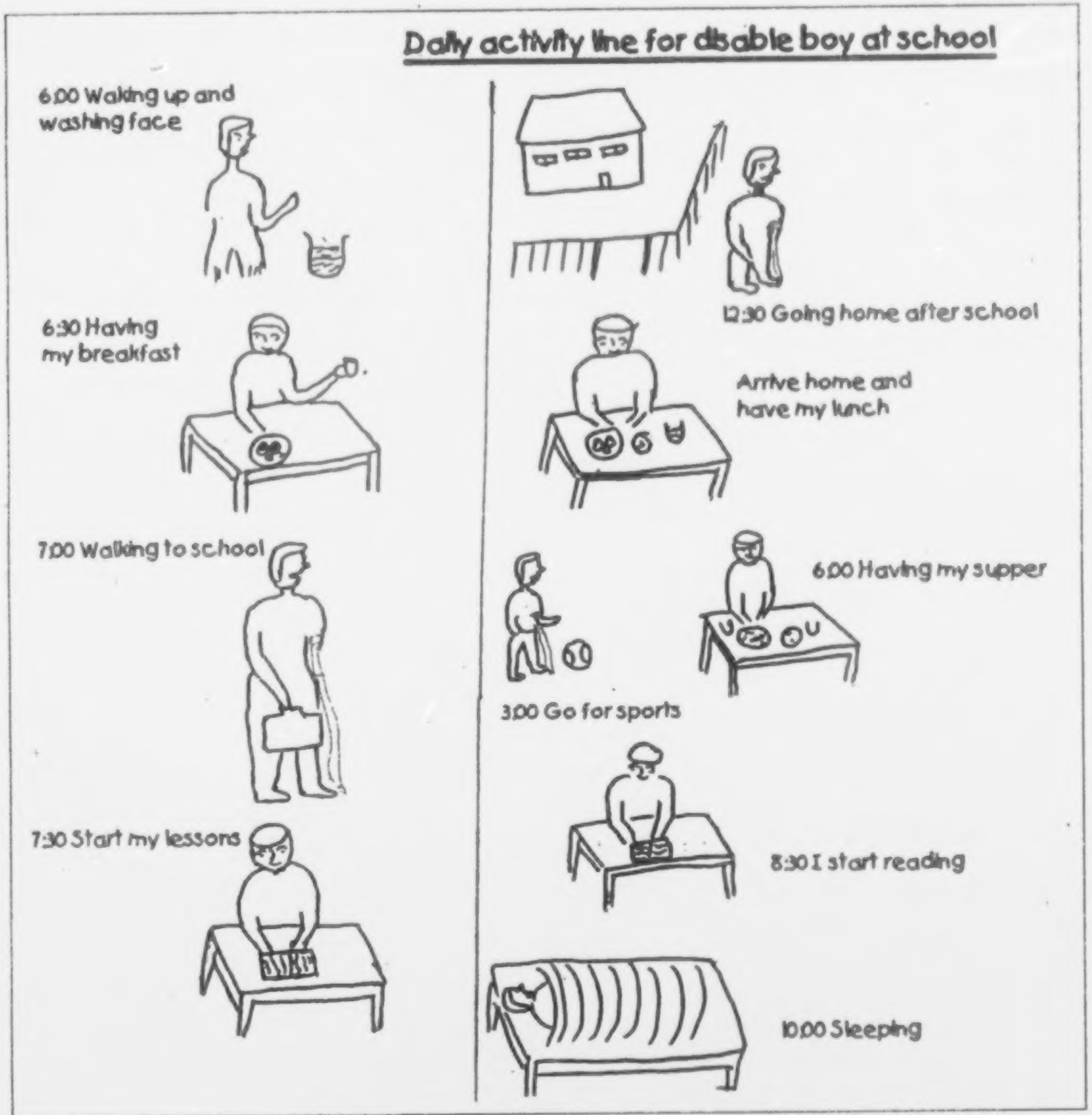
- *I am facing quite a number of problems in my family. I feel very lonely because I am completely isolated from my friends. Whenever I am given a chance to go to school, I will not be allowed to attend other activities even if they have something to do with school. I am expected to report home within a few minutes, after school. I was interested in this research project, but I was forced to withdraw by my stepmother in order for me to engage in income-generating activities. I believe that the reason why she does not want me to interact with other people is because she is afraid that maybe I will tell them about my ill-treatment.*

- *We are beaten almost everyday, even if we have done a small thing. We do not report these beatings to anyone because we do not have access to other relatives. Even if we wish to run away, we do not have money to board buses to get to our other relatives.*

- *We find it hard to run away because our money is usually taken away from us. Those who manage to go away are those who do vending by the roadside. In most cases, when they get money, instead of going home, they then get into emergency taxis which take them to the streets of Harare. When they run away, they usually never come back.*

## Disability

Article 23 of the CRC recognizes the right of disabled children to special care, education and training designed to help them to achieve the greatest possible self-reliance and to lead a full and active life in society. As with health care in general, the two communities are deprived of adequate services to address the needs of disabled children, including early diagnosis and rehabilitative care, as well as parental support and training. While some disabled children attend school, teachers do not have skills to help those with learning disabilities or those who have visual and hearing impairments. Consequently these children are denied necessary support to help their integration into society. During the research, disabled children indicated that community and family attitudes were a mixture of acceptance by some and hostility by others. They felt that more needs to be done to promote the recognition that, with support, they can become productive members of their society rather than a burden. (Case study page 42)


Daily activity line for disable boy at school
6:00 Waking up and washing face
6:30 Having my breakfast
7:00 Walking to school
7:30 Start my lessons
12:30 Going home after school
Arrive home and have my lunch
3:00 Go for sports
6:00 Having my supper
8:30 I start reading
10:00 Sleeping

- *Some disabled children in our community are not treated well by their families. They are seen as a burden because they have to be looked after. Their parents are bitter that they cannot carry out income-generating activities, like other children. The parents have to provide everything, such as food and clothes.*

- *Some parents accept their disabled children and treat them well. They realize that there is nothing that they can do in order to change the situation.*

- *Some of us get ill for a long time without getting treatment. As a result we end up being unable to walk, once we recover. There are some again who are run over by cars because we are near a highway. Some are deaf because of measles. Measles also causes blindness. We have also been told that Polio causes someone to have thin legs.*

- *We are children like any other normal children. Why should we be treated differently?*

- *Our teachers have problems in teaching those who do not hear or who cannot see. Maybe they do not have special training to help these children. But our teachers do their best and still welcome them. They try to treat them like other children.*

- *People generally ignore disabled children, as if they do not exist. They tell us that they are in that condition because they are a curse on their families. They say that the parents of the disabled child committed a crime long ago and now the child is their punishment.*

- *I do not know what the future will be like because I am not going to school. For me to be employed I should get an education and pass my exams, so that I can marry after I have worked. Begging all the time cannot take you anywhere in life. These days life is so expensive and tough, no one can help you. I think that I will have no choice but to beg if my situation does not change. (13-year-old disabled boy, Porta Farm)*

- *My parents send both my sister and brother to school. I am left at home all alone. I am told that I cannot go to a normal school because I need special equipment to assist me to move about. They have no money to take me to school, so I have to stay at home. I have no friends because some children insult and laugh at me. My sister and brother, however, are nice to me.*

- *Being disabled does not mean that I cannot participate in sport. These days I umpire soccer matches. I love doing that, but my dream is to kick the ball, score a goal and hear people shout "hurrah". I used to play basketball using my crutches and you know what, I even scored goals.*

- *I once worked with a carpenter making stools, tables and other wooden things. After some time I asked him to employ me. I was amazed at how negative he was towards me. He told me he could not work with me because I cannot stand for long periods and because I cannot be sent on errands. I had expected him to focus on what I can do. This experience has not discouraged me. Instead it has made me realize what I want to be. I want to be a musician.*

## GENDER ISSUES

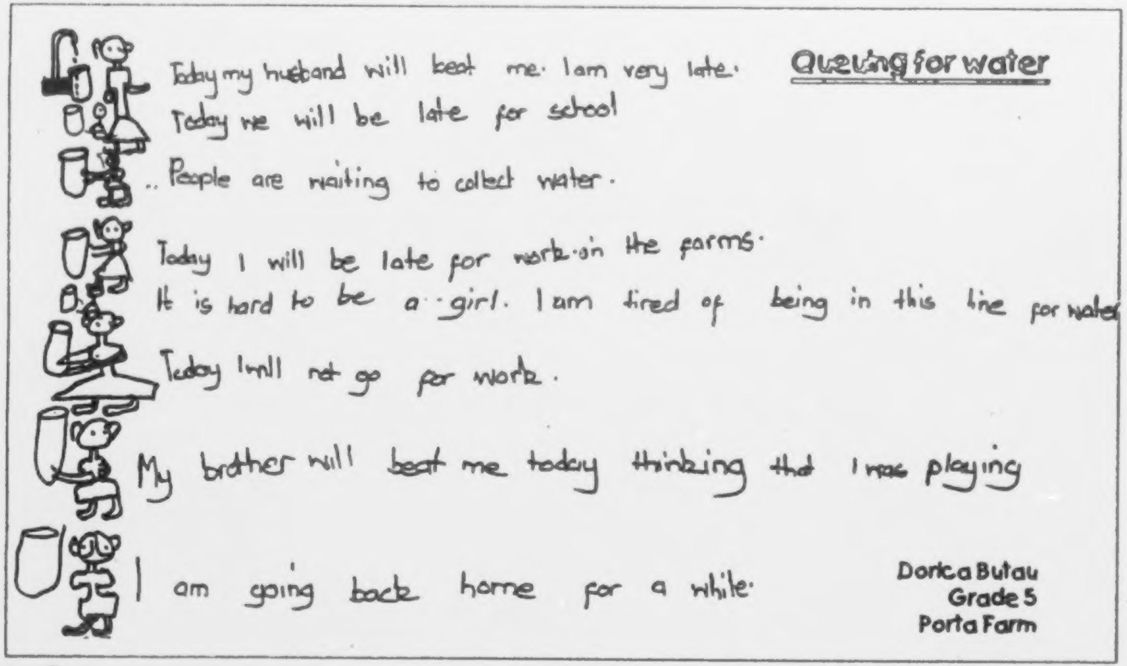
In 1991 the Government of Zimbabwe ratified the Convention On The Elimination Of All Forms Of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). At the same time the constitution has been amended to explicitly prohibit discrimination based on gender. Yet the research by children revealed deep seated patterns of prejudice and stereotyping within these communities towards women and girls. The latter complained that they are given more responsibilities than boys, such as domestic chores and child-minding duties. This can compromise their access to school. Boys agreed that when it came to education, girls were likely to lose out, partly because of a perception by parents that they are too distracted by men to study and partly because families see an investment in education as only benefitting their future husbands. Children echoed popular stereotypes of what girls and boys could and could not do in terms of labour, formal employment, household duties, parenting, etc. While some questioned this perception of roles, and community attitudes and behaviour in relation to gender, the research indicated that much more needs to be done if girls are to enjoy the full range of rights indicated in the above convention

- *In my family we are four children, that is three boys and myself. In the morning I wake up earlier than the boys in order to sweep the yard, wash dishes, fetch water, make a fire and cook breakfast before I go to school. When I finish cooking I find the boys already washed. After they eat, they usually go ahead of me. I will then bath after eating and follow them to school. Often I am late. When I go home after school I will also do work in the house and go vending afterwards. Sometimes my brothers will help me but most of the time, they fish, swim and play football with their friends. When my mother goes to town or to work on the farms, she will ask me to remain at home with the baby, while the boys go to school.*

- *Parents prefer to pay school fees for boys, especially if there are financial hardships. Girls are usually the first to leave school when there is a shortage of money in the house. Parents believe that education is a luxury for girls because even without it, they can get married and live well.*

- *As you all know, girls are supposed to clean the home, cook, wash dishes, fetch water and firewood and look after babies. Through helping mothers with young children they can learn to prepare for their own homes. When we boys are in rural areas we herd cattle and plough the fields but here we go fishing and play football. Although most of us go to the farms, we can also seek jobs in town as we get older. Girls continue to work on farms, especially to look after the farmer's children. (14-year-old boy, Porta Farm)*

- *Some of our friends who live with step-parents and grandmothers are forced to marry while they are still young. These*


Queuing for water
Today my husband will beat me. I am very late.
Today we will be late for school
.. People are waiting to collect water.
Today I will be late for work on the farms.
It is hard to be a girl. I am tired of being in this line for water
Today Iwill not go for work.
My brother will beat me today thinking that I was playing
I am going back home for a while.

Dorica Butau
Grade 5
Porta Farm

## CASE STUDY

### Nyarai's Story

*My name is Nyarai. I live at Porta Farm but my parents originally came from Malawi. I am sixteen years old. I come from a family of five, four girls and one boy. All my brothers and sisters are married. My father died in 1992 and so I live with my mother.*

*I stopped going to school in 1998, at the end of the second term of Form One (the first year in high school). I had to drop out because my mother did not have money to pay for my school fees. I really wanted to go to school and finish up to Form Four. So, in November 1998, I got myself a job working as a domestic worker with the hope that I would raise the money for fees. I looked after two children, a two-year-old baby girl who I spent the day with, and a boy who was in school. I also cleaned the house, cooked meals and washed all the clothes. I was earning just $200 per month for all that work. I never really negotiated for more money because when I found the job I just went into it with the belief that I would make enough money to get me back into school. It was only later, when I told my mother, that she* ☛

advised me to stop working as the money I was earning would not be enough to buy anything big. So I stopped working and came back to Porta Farm.

My mother has a small tuck shop where she sells groceries – mostly maputi (popcorn), sweets, candles and other things. Money raised from this tuckshop is used for educating my four cousins whose mother died. They live with us here and are all in primary school. This means that this money will not benefit me. I am going to spend most of my time selling in this shop. When I am not in the shop, I will be in the house, sweeping, preparing meals, washing clothes and doing any other chores that need to be done.

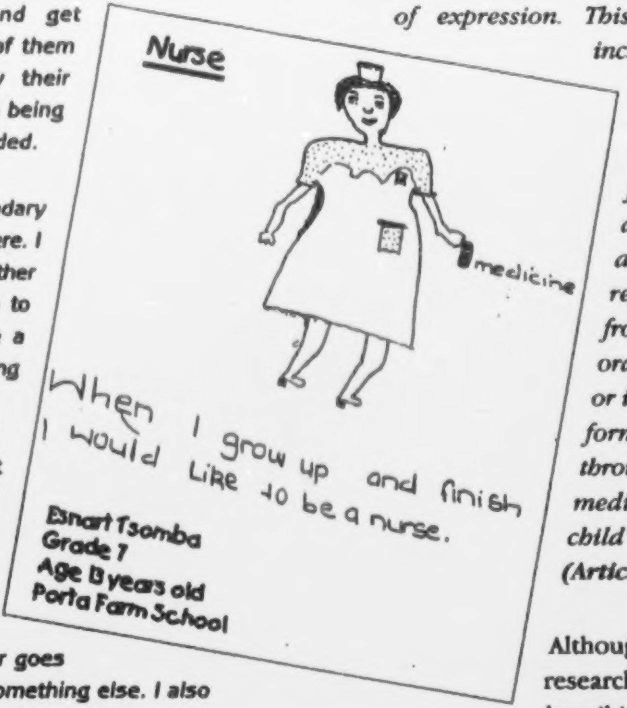
I get very annoyed whenever I see other children of my age in their uniforms and going to school. It really makes me wish I was at school but there is nothing I can do about it because my mother does not have the money.

My sisters went to school up to Forms One and Three and to Grade Seven. They got married without doing any other course so they do not work but are maintained by their husbands. The fact that they are not working is a problem to me because it means they cannot help me. They are depending on their husbands for money and if their parents and caregivers look forward to money they can use to buy extra food, beer and other luxuries. Grandparents are often too old to work and therefore force these young girls into such situations. If these girls are returned by their husbands after some time, they are chased away from home. They then become prostitutes.

- Some of our sisters become pregnant and get married early. Some of them are not accepted by their boyfriends and end up being abandoned and stranded.

- I wish a Secondary School could be built here. I would want to go further with my education, up to university and become a pilot. (Wishes of a young girl in Porta Farm)

- My parents do not allow me to sit around and play while my sister is working. Even if I am a boy, I am asked to wash dishes while my sister goes to fetch water or do something else. I also have to look after the baby. My parents encourage us to do similar work.



- Sometimes I have a lot of work to do, cooking, sweeping and washing clothes and I will be thinking about all these chores. This makes it difficult for me to concentrate in class.

## FUTURE HOPES

> *"The child shall have the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice". (Article 13, CRC)*

Although much of the research was focused on describing the problems that children face in Porta Farm and Dzivarasekwa Extension, they were also keen to express the positive aspects of life in their communities as well as their hopes and wishes. The following extracts are compiled from a series of essays the children completed on what they liked about their communities and what they hope for themselves and their families in future.

- *My name is Fungisai Tauro. I am a girl aged eleven. I am in Grade Five. When I grow up I would like to be a teacher so that I will teach children. My life will be good because I will be earning good money and improve my standard of living. I would like to live in a clean home because I don't like rubbish thrown everywhere. Rubbish can cause cholera which might be dangerous to me and my family. I am a healthy child because I eat potatoes which my family grows in the garden. I will go to other countries to seek for help for furthering my education. The other money will be used for assisting the old people in my community.*

- *My name is Hlalisekile Moyo. I am ten years old. I am learning at Porta Farm School. I am in Grade Six. I would like to get flying colours at the end of my Grade Seven exams next year. I would then like to go to secondary school and then proceed to the university. After university I would like to be a D.J. at ZBC studios. I would like to get married when I am 32 years old. I want to be married to a good husband and I want to have two lovely and healthy children.*

- *I am a girl of sixteen years doing 'O' level. When I finish school I want to be a pilot. If I get some money I would love with all my heart to help people in my community. Some do not go to school. Some do not have clothes. Some do not find enough food to feed themselves, and some are orphans. To those who do not go to school I may help them so that they may be educated, but not all of them. To the others I may look for some donors to help them. To the orphans I may find some assistance so that they may be taken to the institutes. (Sinikiwe Muza, 16 years old, Dzivarasekwa Extension)*

- *When I finish school I would like to be a policeman. I like this job because I will be teaching people about the law. And also I will be travelling from one point to the other boarding buses free. This job is good because you will be working with people and they will inform you about those who do bad things like stealing, killing and rape. Thieves will avoid you and when you get in contact with them, you arrest them. Policemen maintain peace and order. They also want people of Zimbabwe to live peacefully. When people make public fights they are arrested and asked to pay a big*

*husbands do not give them this money, it means they do not have any. Now imagine them asking for money from their husbands to send me to school. That is impossible because they have their own problems. If they were educated, they would be the right people to help as they are my closest relatives after my mother.*

*I want to look after myself. I have tried to think of what I can do. A lot of young girls here prostitute themselves for money. They frequent the bars here. The way people behave has something to do with the environment. It is an environment that encourages you to misbehave, or not to care. What I mean, is that you can come here knowing your dreams and ambitions, and knowing that you are a well-mannered person of good morals. Once you make friends with other girls around here, your character can change in two weeks – which is, of course, if you cannot control yourself. You become loose and no longer value things. Sixteen-year-old girls like me are dating married men, old enough to be their fathers. These men do not give them anything, except for them being seen sitting in nice cars. I went to school with a girl who now has a four-year-old child. She gave birth to her child when she was twelve years old. The father of the child disappeared. It is* *funny how we are deceived by useless things such as cars, empty promises and by old men.*

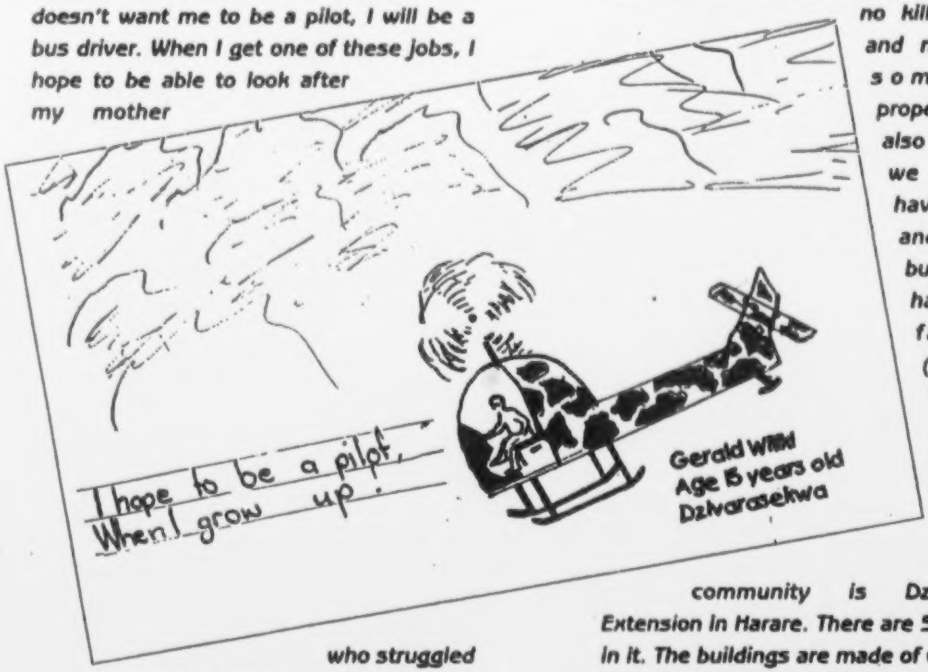
*In other communities, you would find elderly people keeping the younger people in check, either through the things they say or the way they react to immoral behaviour. In this community, it is the old people who mostly frequent the bars and spend the day dancing.*

*I almost fell into that trap but each time I went to Harare I would see other girls of my age in school uniforms, going to school, getting ahead and leaving me behind. I value schooling because education is the way out of poverty. Once I have an education, I can find a better job and look after myself.*

*Vocational education is great because it prepares you to go straight into work, either sewing clothes or as a carpenter. But I do not mind what education I get, as long as it is education.*

*fine. If they don't have this money, they will be sent to prison. (Petronella Ngwenyama, 14 years old, Dzivarasekwa Extension)*

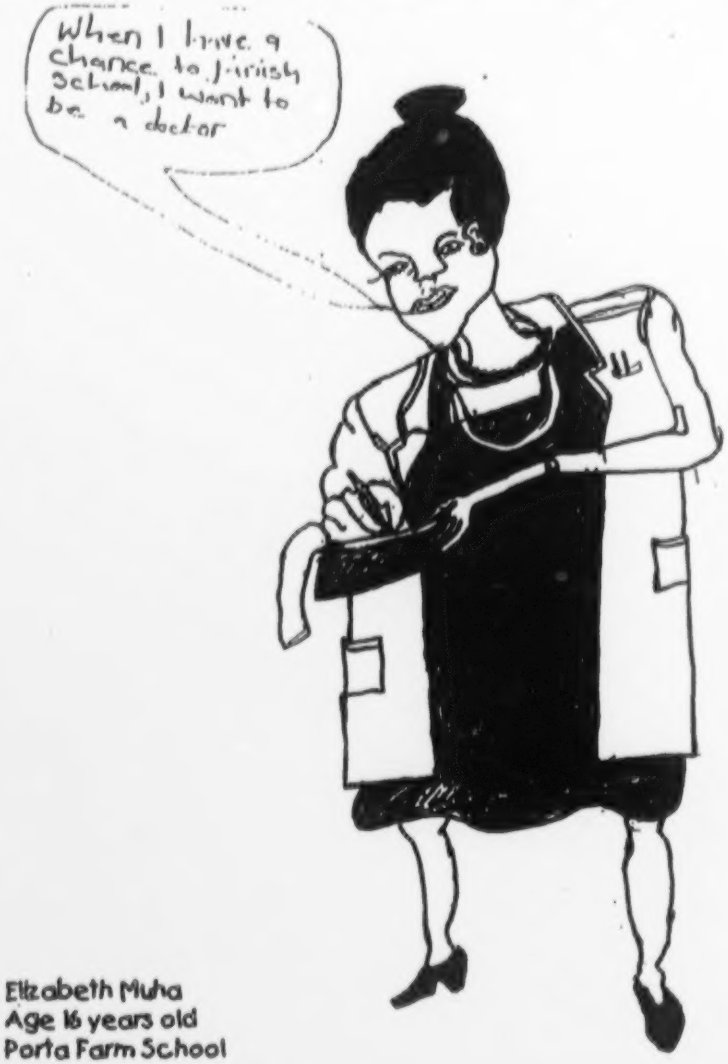
- *My hope for the future is very little. The first thing that I hope in future when I finish my 'O' levels is to be a pilot. If God doesn't want me to be a pilot, I will be a bus driver. When I get one of these jobs, I hope to be able to look after my mother who struggled to look after me. But I can see myself moulding bricks in my life because I'm not going to secondary school. But I hope to look after my mother who is struggling so hard for my life. If I deeply think about this, I always want to cry. What I like in Porta Farm is to live free. We don't pay rent and water charges. These things are for free here. At school I like those who help us to build the school. In our Community the Neighbourhood Watch Committee is safeguarding us. Yes, they are trying by all means to keep us free from thieves. In Porta we say no fighting, no killing others and no stealing someone's property. What I also like is that we did not have toilets and a clinic but now we have these facilities. (Emmanuel Tugwete, 13 years old, Porta Farm)*



- *My community is Dzivarasekwa Extension in Harare. There are 597 houses in it. The buildings are made of wood. They are called cabins. In my community I like the togetherness of people. This is shown when people demonstrate to the Minister of Housing, so that he may give them land, so they may build houses of bricks. There are many churches in our community.*

*People like going to church. This avoids many troubles. If there are troubles they will be small. There is cheap life because the rent is reasonable for two cabins. The water is used for free. There is not the same amount to be paid for a house. Again in our community transport is easily accessible. We don't travel long distances on foot. (Sinikiwe Muza, 16 years old, Dzivarasekwa Extension)*

- *During my spare time, I help mother by selling vegetables, tomatoes and eggs at our local market. I play basketball, netball and many other games like dunhu, wishu, etc. I enjoy myself when selling at the market because by so doing I am gaining experience as I wish to be a shopkeeper when I finish school. After working in the market my mother will then take over and I will go for my bath. After my bath, I also do my homework, reading different types of books and novels in order to improve my English. Some days I tell lies to my mother that I am not feeling well in order for me to spend the whole day relaxing on my bed. I will be too lazy to do the washing. (Christine Tembo, 12 years old, Dzivarasekwa Extension)*


When I have a chance to finish School, I want to be a doctor

Elizabeth Muha
Age 16 years old
Porta Farm School

# CHAPTER 5

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### Issues of Identity

Nearly half of all children living in Dzivarasekwa Extension and Porta Farm do not have a birth certificate and are thus denied the right to citizenship in their country of birth. The communities are frequently labelled as "squatter camps" a name which promotes a negative image of the settlements and is disliked by most of the children living there. The lack of extended family support and family disintegration also limits the children's access to a variety of positive influences.

One of the most simple recommendations that emerged from the research is to respect the children's wish to be called "people" rather than "squatters":

> *"People should call us people from Dzivarasekwa 5, call us people, call us by our names. We are all the same and by calling us squatters, they are insulting us".*
>
> *"I want to be called by my name because I have a name".*
>
> *"A squatter is a person living in a prohibited area. We are not refugees. The government brought us here. So, we are not squatters. We are living here legally."*

As the majority of residents in these settlements were placed there by government, it is essential that their status be regularized. The term "temporary" has severely limited service provision from either the government or the City of Harare for the last eight years. These settlements must now be accorded permanent status, which will protect residents from the disadvantages associated with living in a temporary environment, such as lack of investment in infrastructure and services. The communities themselves, human rights organizations and NGOs should co-ordinate a campaign to achieve this end.

## Birth Certificates And Identity Documents

The issue of birth certificates is complex. Although some children recognized the importance of birth certificates, they also highlighted the difficulties in obtaining this document when families break down and births have not been recorded. Orphans are particularly vulnerable. Economic hardships prevent caregivers travelling back to the area where the children were born and gaining documentation from two witnesses of the birth. Children with parents of foreign origin are particularly disadvantaged.

> *"I do not have a birth certificate because my parents lived apart for a long time. We did not have the money to go to Gweru and bring my father to Harare so that we could go to the National Registration office and get my birth certificate."*

> *"I do not have a birth certificate because we still owe a lot of rent to the owner of the house in which we live. We can only think of getting it once all the money owed is paid up. I am writing exams this year. But my mother does not have a national identity card because it was burned when our house was burnt down. This means I cannot get a birth certificate"*

Owning a birth certificate is critical for anyone living in Zimbabwe, as without this document it is impossible to register a child at school, sit Grade Seven, ZJC and 'O' level examinations, obtain an ID card or passport, register as a practising lawyer or at a university or college. It is therefore recommended that mobile registration units be taken to each community to allow children to be registered and issued with birth certificates.

There is also need to develop a policy for the provision of birth certificates for orphans and for parents who find it impossible to collect the necessary documentation. In order to ensure the efficacy of the above recommended actions, a campaign for educating parents and caregivers as to the importance of gaining birth certificates for their children, needs to be integrated into advocacy work around this issue.

## The Living Environment

The physical conditions in Dzivarasekwa Extension and Porta Farm are very poor. Inadequate sanitation, intermittent water supplies, poor housing and the lack of electricity affect community health and the right of the children to a standard of living adequate to their physical, mental, social and spiritual development. The children identified the minimum improvements to their environments that would enable them to lead a healthy life.

> *"We need electricity. We have a lot of open spaces here that become dark and dangerous at night. Electricity would make these areas safer. It would help the police prevent possible cases of rape".*

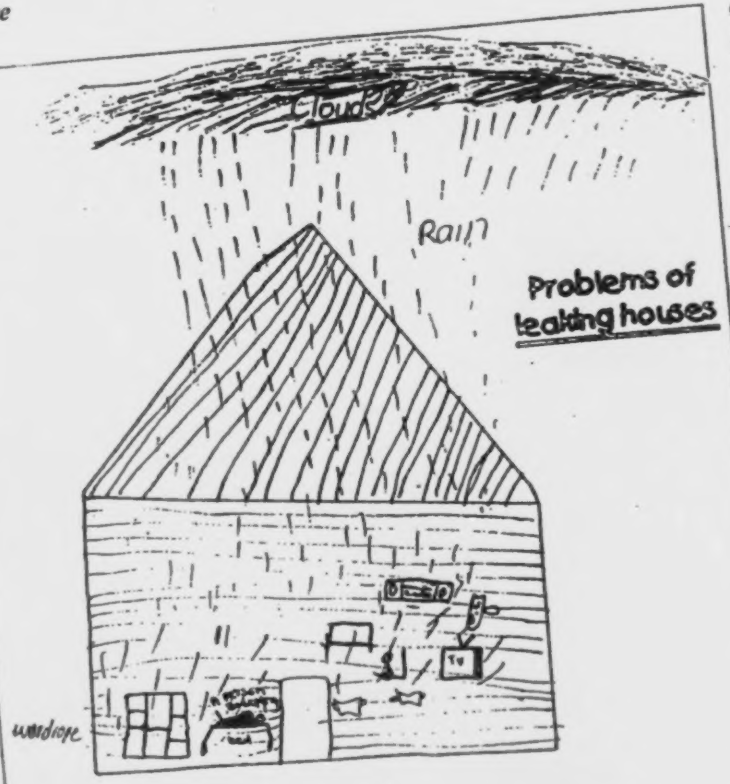
> *"We can form a co-operative, make contributions and save the money. Once we have enough money we can start building houses for ourselves. It is time that we had homes that are*

*permanent and not those that are temporary".*

*"We can change our own environment by educating people about how to keep Dzivarasekwa Extension clean through clean behaviour".*

*"We need more and better toilets to cater for all of the people here."*

The outbreak of cholera in Zimbabwe in 1999 has made the provision of adequate sanitation in peri-urban informal settlements, critical. It is therefore recommended that government and NGOs provide funding for this purpose as a matter of urgency. Such inputs in latrine construction and provision of adequate water supplies, should be part of a participatory model in which communities are trained to build and maintain their own latrines and water points.



Problem of leaking houses. This causes our household goods to be damaged. AT Times people Have sleepless Nights Because houses will be flooded

Tapfumanei Kuveva
Age 11 years old
Porta Farm

In Dzivarasekwa Extension an NGO, Dialogue On Shelter For The Homeless, has facilitated housing savings clubs. In order for them to use the savings to improve their houses they require authorization from the Ministry of Local Government. Such permission is denied because of the temporary status of the settlements. It is therefore recommended that NGOs and the communities themselves lobby for a change in their legal status. Savings clubs should also be encouraged in Porta Farm.

The lack of drainage and adequate road surfaces and infrequent collection of rubbish all contribute to the poor living environment of Dzivarasekwa Extension and Porta Farm. As residents of Dzivarasekwa Extension pay rent to the City of Harare, the council should be lobbied for their provision. The confusion as to who is responsible for Porta Farm, (which Ministries, City of Harare, Mashonaland West Provincial Administration etc) must be clarified and the identified agency encouraged to provide such services.

## Health

The Ministry of Health, through its health promotion programme, has made tremendous strides in improving the health situation within

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The existence of community-based health workers has assisted in expanding this service to some marginalized areas.

Although efforts are being made at health promotion in the informal, peri-urban settlements, investment in these areas is minimal. The vulnerability of the community to infection and outbreaks of disease was highlighted by a health worker in Porta Farm.

> *"Porta Farm is an unhealthy environment to live in for a number of reasons. Firstly, although there are some Blair toilets, these are not enough for all the people living here. Besides, many people opt to use the bush. This in itself is a health threat. Secondly, many people are so poor they are forced to eat what they pick from rubbish heaps or bins. Some of these people bring the meat home and prepare it for the whole family to eat. They later get sick."*

The Ministry of Health and NGOs can assist in the training of additional health workers who need to be fully recognized and paid by the Ministry, to carry out a more extensive health, hygiene and nutrition programme.

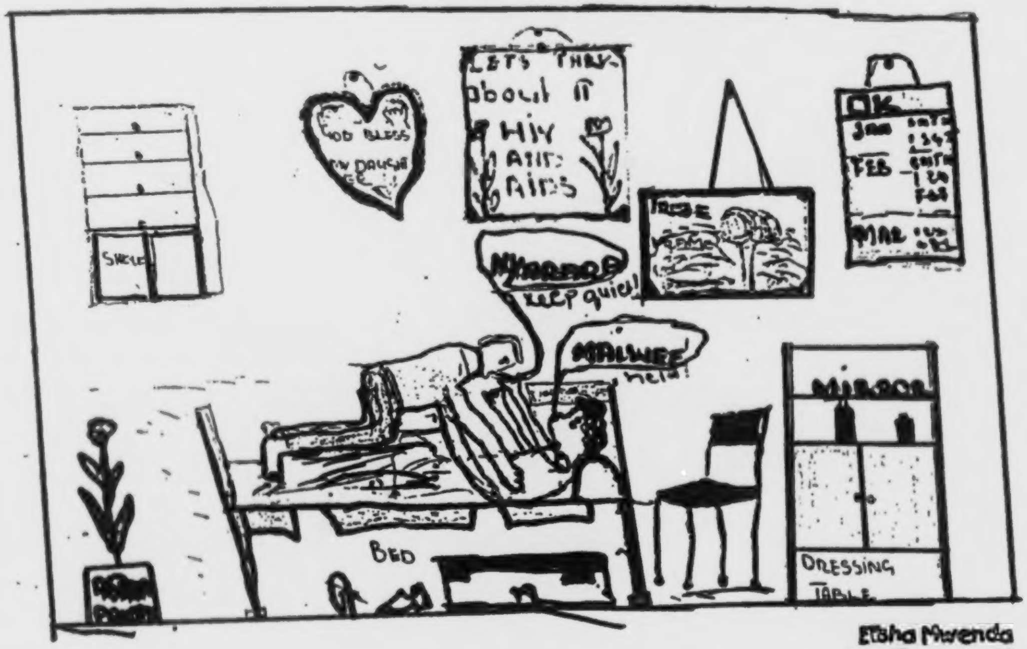
## HIV/AIDS Education

HIV/AIDS is a major concern within informal, periurban communities where there is a high risk of infection because of the migratory nature of many inhabitants and the economic vulnerability of women, and children, forced into prostitution.

> *"When some of our friends are raped, the rapist does not use protective measures. As a result, this puts them at*

Child abuse

The father is raping his daughter
Baba vari kubata mwana vravo chibharo



Elisha Mwenda
Age 13 years old
Dzivarasekwa

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> *high risk of infection. Some of our friends also practice prostitution because they need to get quick money to use at school. Some are being forced into prostitution by hungry parents and stepmothers. Very few do it for enjoyment."*

NGOs and national bodies involved with HIV/AIDS work, need to expand their HIV/AIDS awareness creation, prevention and care programmes into these areas. Children throughout the research showed some understanding about the transmission of HIV, but still had many gaps in their knowledge.

## Vulnerable Children

As in many communities in Zimbabwe there are growing numbers of orphans in informal, peri-urban settlements. Yet the absence of services and infrastructure, and the breakdown of family and community ties means that children in these locations are particularly disadvantaged and vulnerable. A care and support programme needs to be developed by NGOs and government bodies, already doing similar work in other areas. The counselling and community education component of such programmes could then be extended to other children in difficult circumstances, for example abused and disabled children.

In the case of abuse, an area which was highlighted by children in many discussions, more research needs to be done to establish the extent and nature of the problem. Unless a service, professional counselling and legal protection is available, a child who reports abuse may be placed in an even worse situation. There is an urgent need to establish an education, protection and care programme in the above communities if the problem is to be adequately addressed.

At the same time, the particular vulnerability of the girl child also needs to be tackled. Heavy domestic chores, lack of access to educational opportunities, vulnerability to sexual abuse, etc., are issues that need to be raised within the community to help reverse this kind of gender based discrimination.

## Education

The government, through the Ministry of Education, has made significant progress in providing primary school education, available for all, in Zimbabwe. Unregistered schools in peri-urban areas are affiliated to registered schools, so that pupils may sit for their final exams. However, the goal in peri-urban settlements is for their schools to become registered, in order to access the support that comes with such status. Substantial investment in infrastructure will be required to achieve this end.

At the same time, an evaluation of the education curriculum is necessary. The study revealed that very few people can secure formal employment or set up their own projects in Dzivarasekwa Extension and Porta Farm because they lack practical skills. There is therefore the need to promote the inclusion of "hands on" practical subjects into the present primary level syllabus, so that if children fail to further their education (the majority in such communities) they can gain employment using such skills.

## Economic Issues

The low incomes of families living in Dzivarasekwa Extension and Porta Farm means that labour is a significant feature of children's lives. Some children leave school to work full-time and other children complained that their income is not used to support their education. This seriously impacts upon the future of each child withdrawn from school as it denies him/her the fundamental right to education and perhaps the future possibility of escaping their cycle of poverty.

The International Save the Children Alliance suggests that the best interests of working children must be paramount in the short and long term and that children's work must be seen in the context of the rest of their lives. The worst forms of child labour must be identified and working children, their families and civil society organizations be included in implementing plans of action to eradicate these forms of labour. The inclusion of the community in such plans is critical and it is recommended that child welfare fora be convened in each settlement to examine this issue and develop realistic solutions.

It is recognized that the issue of child labour is complex and that some contribution is required from children to assist their families. However these children should also attend school. Programmes that create employment, business training and income-generating schemes could all assist adults in removing some of the labour burden from their children. Civil rights organizations should follow up cases of excessive, hazardous work in places such as the tobacco farm detailed in one of the case studies in the report.

## Child Participation

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, which the Government of Zimbabwe ratified in 1990, clearly stipulates that children have the right to air his/her views and opinions. The dilemma that exists currently is about what child participation really is. Many adults feel it is a challenge to their authority and that it gives children too much power. NGOs and other institutions, including relevant government bodies, (the Department of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare recognize and promote Child Rights) need to shed some light on the issue. Such organizations should conduct an information campaign in Zimbabwe, to convince sceptical adults that child participation is not an invitation to indiscipline and unruly behaviour. The levels of enhanced responsibility, self-esteem and confidence among children witnessed in projects like this one, needs to be disseminated so that the participation of children, in a manner appropriate to their age and circumstances, is viewed more favourably by the Zimbabwean public.

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

## CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CRC)

The UN Convention on the Rights Of The Child was the outcome of a decade of international debate devoted to the meaning of children's rights. It was adopted unanimously by the UN General Assembly in November 1989 and has now been ratified by 191 countries, a significantly greater number than any other human rights document. It is a comprehensive statement of children's rights, combining economic, social and cultural rights with political and civil rights. It gives these rights the force of international law and provides for the development of the individual child in an atmosphere of freedom, dignity and justice.

Four principles embody the spirit of the CRC and are fundamental to the interpretation of all other rights. They are:

*The Best Interests Of The Child*, which establishes that in all actions concerning children their best interest should be a primary consideration.

*Survival And Development*, which not only prioritizes children's rights to survival and development but also the right to develop to their fullest potential in every respect, including their personality, talents and abilities.

*Non-Discrimination*, which establishes that children's rights apply to all children without discrimination of any kind, for example, on grounds of gender, disability, ethnicity, religion and citizenship.

*Participation*, which sets out the principle that children should be listened to on any matter which concerns them, and their views given due consideration in accordance with their age and maturity.

***Blair Toilet:*** A special type of low cost latrine that incorporates a design to prevent transmission of disease by flies.

***Emergency Taxis:*** Low cost "taxi" that provides an alternative to the sometimes inefficient public transport system.

***Gure:*** A cultural ceremony from Malawi and Zambia. This is widespread in Zimbabwe's Commercial Farms where much of the population originates from these two countries.

***Kwashiorkor:*** An illness caused by extreme malnutrition.

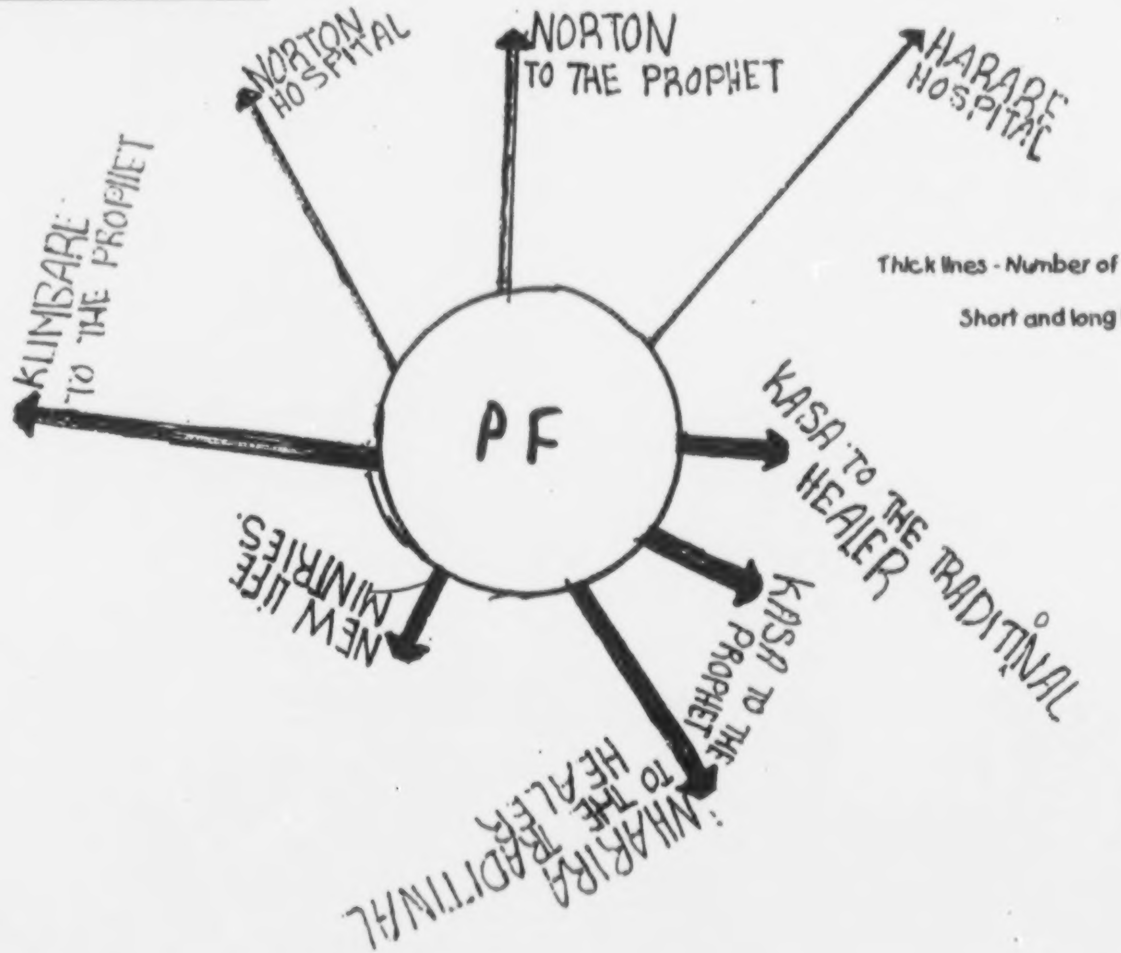
***Mbuya:*** Grandmother

***Piece Work:*** This is a type of agricultural labour where payment is made after completion of a particular task rather than by an hourly or daily rate.

***Pole and Dagga:*** A common type of housing construction in poor urban and rural areas, using a mixture of mud, grass and wood.

***Sadza:*** A major part of the Zimbabwean diet, made from ground maize meal.

**Mobility map health providers**


NORTON HOSPITAL
NORTON TO THE PROPHET
HARARE HOSPITAL
KUMBARE TO THE PROPHET
PF
KASA TO THE TRADITIONAL HEALER
NEW LIFE MINIRIES.
KASA TO THE PROPHET
NHARIRA TO THE TRADITIONAL HEALER

Thick lines - Number of times the place visited

Short and long lines - Distance

Linda Round
Age 13 years old
Porta Farm

# APPENDIX 1

## Research Methodologies

| RESEARCH METHOD | RESEARCH PROCESS | INFORMATION GATHERED | OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED | ADAPTATIONS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS (INDIVIDUAL) | This was done through a questionnaire consisting of 12 different issues with an average of five questions per issue.<br>The issues included those on identity, the living environment, education, health, economic issues, gender, disability, orphanhood, child abuse and hopes for the future.<br>It was mainly carried out with individual children to source for information. | It gave researchers an opportunity to source personal information from certain individuals, which might not have come out in a group.<br>It also reflected the perceptions of individual children about their living conditions. Specific categories of children were targeted, e.g., orphans, disabled children, out of school youth, etc.<br>A few of these interviews were conducted with adults, e.g., a health worker and grandmother /caregiver. | It was difficult to complete all the questions when a child is required to do some other duties at home.<br>Some children were reluctant to divulge personal information. | None |

| RESEARCH METHOD | RESEARCH PROCESS | INFORMATION GATHERED | OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED | ADAPTATIONS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGD) | This was a method to gather information in a group. It was accompanied by guidelines so that child researchers would focus on all the issues previously identified.<br>The groups mostly comprised four to six children and three child researchers, that is, a key questioner and two recorders. The research groups generally had a mix of boys and girls. | This gathered a wide range of information from the targeted group, and was more free flowing and exploratory than individual interviews. Children helped each other respond to the questions and also suggested new areas of investigation. The method also derived different views and opinions of several participants at any one time.<br>Most of the research findings were derived from the use of this method which was very participatory in approach. | It was difficult to stop passerbys from listening to the discussion. This resulted in having more than the required number of children. Such large numbers were difficult to control for the three child researchers.<br>The monitored sessions with the adult co-ordinators, provided an opportunity for the children to be taught how to politely ask the non-participants to leave.<br>Some children had a tendency of dominating others so the researchers would pull them out and give them something else to do. | None |

| RESEARCH METHOD | RESEARCH PROCESS | INFORMATION GATHERED | OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED | ADAPTATIONS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRISAL METHODS*<br>3. MOBILITY MAP | This was a tool which was used to show the places which the participants visited and activities done, for example, recreation, workplace, business, etc.<br>It also reflected the distance from their community and frequency of visit. The short and long lines on the map show the distance and the thick lines show the frequency. It was normally used with larger groups.<br>It was interesting for the researchers to see the arguments and debates that would ensue about the distance to a place or what was done at a particular location. | Collected information on where children play, work and where they order their items for sale. A lot of activities were based on income generation.<br>The researchers were surprised that a lot of useful information could be derived through the use of what they saw as a simple tool. They also mentioned that their peers liked to do that exercise.<br>Children were also able to pictorially depict the different activities done at each place. It was interesting to note that the children could mention completely different activities for similar places. | There was the difficulty of children trying to depict a lot of information on one map. The participants were urged either to mention the places by name or to develop a key if they chose to depict the places pictorially.<br>Even though the researchers were not specifically emphasizing well drawn diagrams, some children found it very hard to even develop a small illustration. Although they were encouraged at first, in most cases these children would be asked to write essays on particular topics e.g their hopes for their future or how they can help their community to solve its problems. | Children felt that it was not enough just to draw a map and write down the activities which took place at each location. They felt that drawing pictures was better in showing what they did at different places. |

| RESEARCH METHOD | RESEARCH PROCESS | INFORMATION GATHERED | OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED | ADAPTATIONS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL*<br>4.DAILY ACTIVITY LINE | Children will write down all the activities which they do in a day. They then indicated the length of time each activity takes to be accomplished. Pictures depicting activities done within that time were also drawn.<br>Child researchers came up with three different methods on this activity. These were:-<br>a. Listing down all activities done in a day and indicating a period of time against it.<br>b. Drawing pictures showing the activity and time taken.<br>c. By representing the length of time devoted to each activity through longer or shorter shapes. | Information on how children spend their day was obtained. The researchers learnt that children in these communities spend a large part of their time in income-generating activities.<br>Information that was particularly useful was the different roles and duties girls and boys had in a day. The researchers learnt that girls had more to do before attending school and more to do after school, leaving them with little time to study. The girls were made to draw their own time line diaries and boys were also asked to draw what they thought the girl's day was like and vice versa.<br>It was interesting to see that the boys acknowledged the heavier duties of girls. Although the boys did a lot of work, especially in terms of income generation, they had more time to play.<br>The diagrams also shed light on the different activities done by children either as domestic chores or for income generation. | Drawing pictures was a problem for some children.<br>It was not easy when interviewing a child who had both parents, together with an orphan, because their activities are different.<br>It was difficult to make boys and girls develop their time lines in one session. They always tried to outdo each other in terms of the duties they claimed to do. Following debate boys saw that girls had more to do. | Children drew pictures instead of lines to depict their activities. They also depicted their daily timetables by simply writing down an activity and time taken against it. |

| RESEARCH METHOD | RESEARCH PROCESS | INFORMATION GATHERED | OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED | ADAPTATIONS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5. PICTURE CODES | Pictures gave an opportunity to those who were not good in writing to participate actively because it seemed to be very easy for them. This involved drawing pictures of themselves and the situation they live in. Sensitive issues were raised by children using this method, such as sexual and physical abuse.<br>They also drew pictures that depicted a story e.g., how sexual abuse took place. A picture of a girl coming from school then fetching firewood, being followed and then being raped was drawn. | Information on sensitive issues was derived through this tool. The living conditions and hardships faced by step-children in their families was expressed through this method.<br>The picture codes developed by the children were very informative and thought provoking. They reflected some issues that the children did not readily want to discuss.<br>It was an excellent way of drawing out children who were shy and quiet. | Some pictures were not clear. They were hard to follow. They needed the child to add a verbal explanation in order to get the idea they were trying to put across. | Instead of just drawing a picture, children drew pictures which narrated a story, for example, how a person gets diarrhoea as a result of unhygienic practices and ends up in hospital. |

| RESEARCH METHOD | RESEARCH PROCESS | INFORMATION GATHERED | OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED | ADAPTATIONS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *RANKING METHODS*<br>A) WHEEL DIAGRAM | Children brainstormed the problems they face in their communities and then ranked them by dividing the wheel into portions, according to the size of the problem. A major problem would take up a big portion on the wheel. | This method provided information on children's priorities in the communities. Participants were involved with ranking the general problems faced in an area. They had to rank according to which was the most serious of the problems. Although children mentioned numerous problems, they were asked to rank at most six to eight problems of concern to them.<br>Researchers got information on what ranked highest amongst specific problems in the education sector and what diseases ranked highest in the health sector. | Sometimes it was not easy for the participants to come up with nicely apportioned wheel diagrams. They would divide the wheel, or the "cake" as they liked to call it, in their own way. The child researchers liked and understood the method so much that they wanted to do the drawing themselves, while their peers supplied answers. This was a practice that adult co-ordinators tried to discourage. | The children had to divide the circle according to the seriousness of the problem, meaning that the most common problem would have a bigger pie. They adapted the method by dividing the wheel using concentric circles. According to the researchers the result was the same, with the most serious problem indicated by the outer circle. Although they made these adaptations during the testing period of the research tools, they used one consistent method for the actual data collection. |

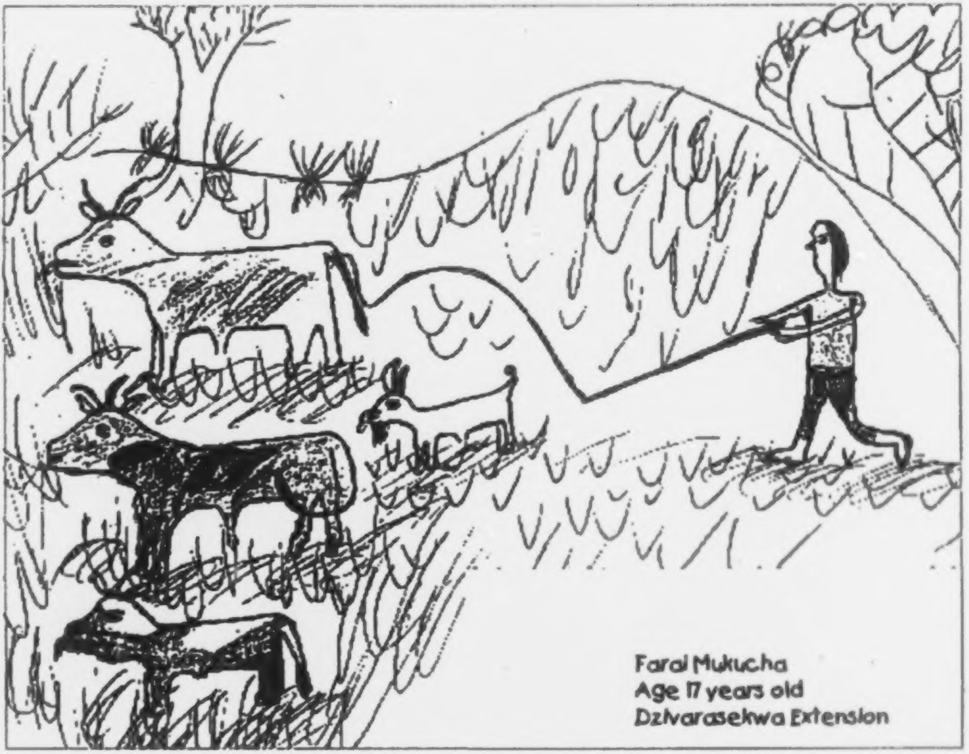
| RESEARCH METHOD | RESEARCH PROCESS | INFORMATION GATHERED | OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED | ADAPTATIONS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| B. STONE PILING | This method was used during the brain storming of problems faced in the community. The participants ranked the problems on the ground using stones before they finally recorded the data.<br>This method promoted active debate amongst the children and they could revise their ranking as often as they liked. | It was helpful in promoting dialogue between children in order for them to determine the characteristics for each category.<br>Percentages were drawn using this method for the two communities, e.g., In Dzivarasekwa 85% of the people were classified as poor, 10% in the medium range and 5% rich. | This approach took a long time as children kept correcting. It created a lot of arguments as each child would not like his/her idea to be changed. | Instead of just heaping more stones on a big problem, they felt that one big stone could reflect a big problem.<br>Children also improvised by using any other available material in the community other than stones, e.g., sticks, leaves, etc. |

| RESEARCH METHOD | RESEARCH PROCESS | INFORMATION GATHERED | OBSTACLES ENCOUNTERED | ADAPTATIONS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *OTHER METHODS*<br>A. DIARY KEEPING | Child researchers recorded all the information they gathered per session in their notebooks. They were also encouraged to record their feelings during the process. There are typical examples of children who thought that the whole process was difficult at first but gained confidence as they went along. They recorded daily proceedings and direct quotes from children about particular issues. They included information from the interviewees, who indicated that they had never experienced a process like this before. They highlighted that it was important for them to have someone to listen to their issues. | The keeping of diaries by the researchers meant that many of the feelings and perceptions of children were recorded. Sometimes important information was derived from the general conversations children had with their peers. The fact that adult co-ordinators also kept diaries meant that there was another dimension of the research process that was recorded. | Some of the recordings were illegible. This resulted in difficulties in trying to interpret the information.<br>Some children also relaxed when it came to taking down notes. There was need to keep encouraging them and to stress the importance of the data at the end of the process.<br>Diagrams which were sometimes done hurriedly were also difficult to comprehend. It needed the child's explanation for one to actually understand what they were trying to put across. | None |

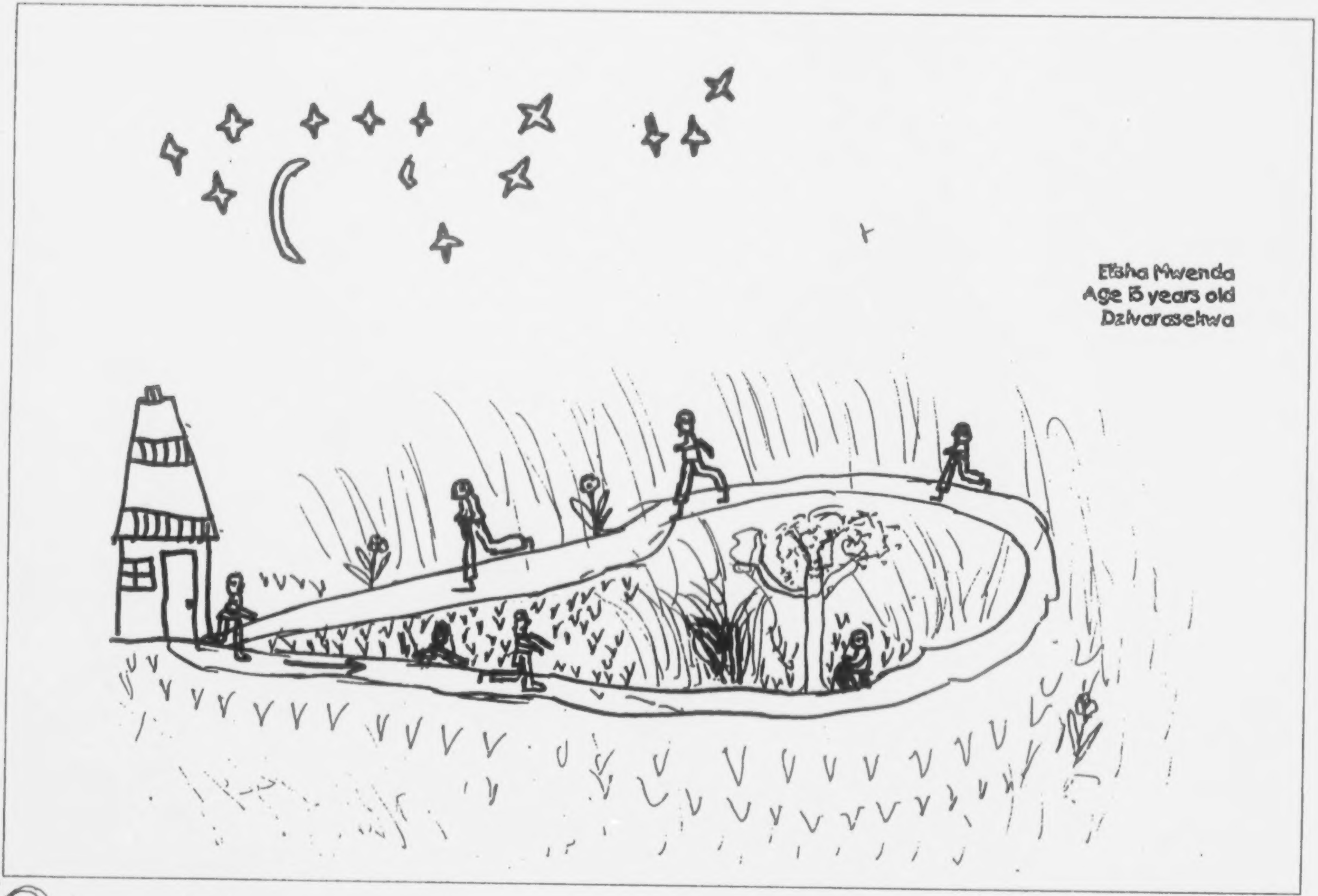
***FAMILIARIZATION METHODS*** for example, ***social maps*** were used as ice breakers to get the researchers talking about their area. The map enabled the children to highlight the main features in their own location e.g., the school, houses, toilets, water taps, roads, etc. Games and songs were also used for motivation purposes, to make children more interested in the activities to come. Games like "change your partner" were done. This game was meant for trust and confidence building. Originally children would run to familiar friends and gradually they started pairing up with less familiar faces. Girls only started pairing with boys after a few runs of this game. The fact that the adult co-ordinators also participated in the games meant that they were able to establish rapport much more quickly.

A favourite for the children was the Buses game. This bus called for people of particular characteristics to get on board at any one time. Examples were all people who were originally from Malawi, Zambia or Mozambique. Sometimes the bus called for girls or all people who attend the Faith Apostolic church, etc.

Another method used in the initial training of the researchers was a ***transect walk***. The children liked this method. It enabled the researchers to move around the community with the co-ordinators showing them the area and the resources within it. The children took pride in displaying their knowledge and were able to answer specific questions about their environment.



Faral Mukucha
Age 17 years old
Dzivarasekwa Extension



Elsha Mwenda
Age 15 years old
Dzivarasekwa

# APPENDIX 2

## Development Activities in Dzivarasekwa Extension and Porta Farm

### *Dzivarasekwa Extension*

* Inter-Country People's Aid and Redd Barna are working as partners in a three-year programme to increase access for children to basic education and education on child rights, in a project called Basic Education, Dzivarasekwa 5.[1]

* Inter-Country People's Aid, with funding from Save the Children USA, have initiated a hand made paper making project for women within the community.

* Inter-Country People's Aid and Tzedek UK are piloting an apprenticeship scheme for forty residents of Dzivarasekwa Extension.

* Inter-Country People's Aid is training a group of youth in Dzivarasekwa Extension to educate their peers about HIV/Aids.

* Inter-Country People's Aid has supported a women's sewing group who received capital funding from the US Ambassadors Self Help Fund.

* Inter-Country People's Aid and the Bernard Van Leer Foundation are planning a child right's programme in Dzivarasekwa Extension, Porta Farm and Hatcliffe,

* Book Aid International, through Inter-Country People's Aid, are supplying books for schools in Dzivarasekwa Extension and Porta Farm.

* Sharon School is twinned with Dzivarasekwa Extension pre-school.

* Dialogue On Shelter For The Homeless works with a savings group in Dzivarasekwa Extension.

* The City of Harare is now staffing a clinic built by Inter-Country People's Aid and the US Army.

* The City of Harare is supposed to collect rubbish from Dzivarasekwa Extension. At the time of writing, this service is not being offered.

* The City of Harare funds two Community Health workers in Dzivarasekwa Extension.

* Inter Country People's Aid, with funding from UNICEF, is implementing a sanitation and health education programme in Dzivarasekwa Extension and Hatcliffe Extension.

### *Porta Farm*

* Inter-Country People's Aid, with funding from the British High Commission and technical

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[1] Inter-Country People's Aid works exclusively with residents of peri-urban, informal settlements and all of the organization programmes are supported by core cost funding from the Oak Zimbabwe Foundation.

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support and interventions from Mvuramanzi Trust, have built latrines, extended the water supply and built a primary school classroom and pre-school in Porta Farm.

* Inter-Country People's Aid is providing training for pre-school teachers in Porta Farm with technical assistance from The Farm Community Trust Of Zimbabwe.

* Zimrights are providing ongoing training and support of human rights issues within Porta Farm.

* The Catholic Commission of Justice and Peace, Farm Community Trust and Inter-Country People's Aid are jointly advocating for the provision of birth certificates to the residents of Porta Farm.

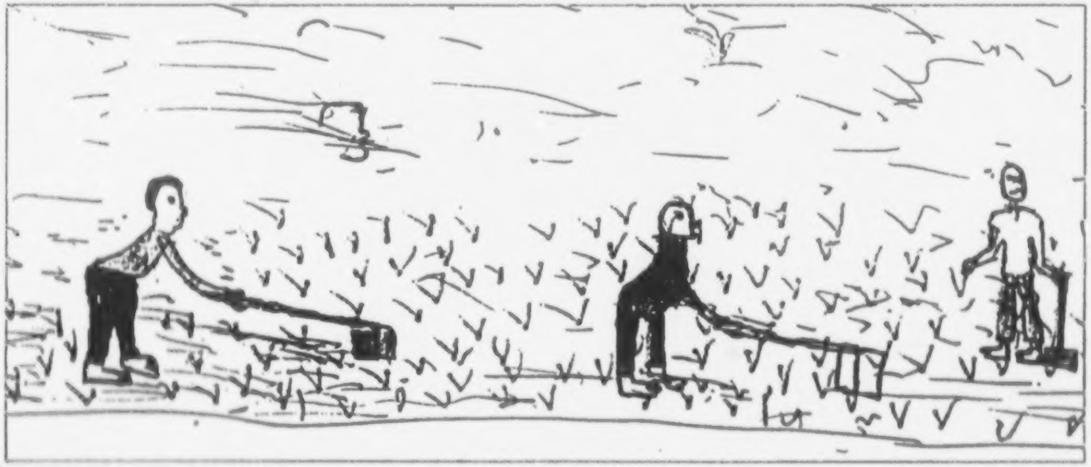
* Silveira House provided training to the community on how to set up a nutrition garden for the community pre-school.

* Martin Luther Church is providing some financial support for the primary school at Porta Farm.

* Heritage School is twinned with Porta Farm primary school.

* Jabula New Life Ministries are providing a mobile clinic service to Porta Farm three times a week.

* Mashambanzou Trust is investigating the possibilities of extending palliative care to Aid's sufferers and HIV/Aids education.



## *Inter-Country People's Aid*

***is a Zimbabwean non-governmental organization (NGO) working in peri-urban, informal settlements to address critical needs through targeted, developmental interventions in the areas of crisis management, education, health, training, economic opportunities, and advocacy.***

***When Inter-Country People's Aid was founded, its activities were focused on Mozambican refugees, running mine awareness campaigns for UNHCR in five refugee camps within Zimbabwe. In anticipation of the successful repatriation programme of May 1995, Inter-Country People's Aid began to broaden its remit to include projects benefiting disadvantaged Zimbabweans and Mozambicans in their respective countries.***

***Guided by their mandate to empower the most disadvantaged members of society, Inter-Country People's Aid has initiated, from 1995 to date, social programmes in Dzivarasekwa Extension, Porta Farm and Hatcliffe Extension. Inter-Country People's Aid's strategic focus is now exclusively on peri-urban, informal settlements surrounding Harare.***

# APPENDIX 3

## Bibliography and Further Reading List

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Government of Zimbabwe (1987) National Action and National Shelter Strategies up to the Year 2000 (Submission of the 10th session of the UN Commission for Human Settlements, Nairobi)

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Moser, C. & Satterthwaite, (1985) The Characteristics and Sociology of Poor Urban Communities. Paper presented to the workshop on Community Health and the Urban Poor (Oxford, UK)

Mutizwa-Mangiza, N. (1985) "Post-Independence Urban Low-income Shelter Policies in Zimbabwe: A Preliminary Appraisal of Affordability in Romaya", in S & G. Franklin, (Eds) Shelter, Services and the Urban Poor (University of Wales, Institute of Science and Technology, Cardiff)

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Simon, D. (1986) "Regional Inequality, Migration and Development: The Case Of Zimbabwe", in Tidschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie Vol. 77, pp 7-17

*UNICEF (1996) Zimbabwe: Basic Facts on Education (UNICEF, Harare)*

*Wekwete, K. (1987) Development of Urban Planning in Zimbabwe Occasional Paper No. 8 (University of Zimbabwe)*

*World Health Organization (1988) Urbanization and its Implications for Child Health: Potential for Action (Geneva)*

## Child Rights And Participation

There are several good discussions on the issues raised by the Convention On The Rights Of The Child. These include:

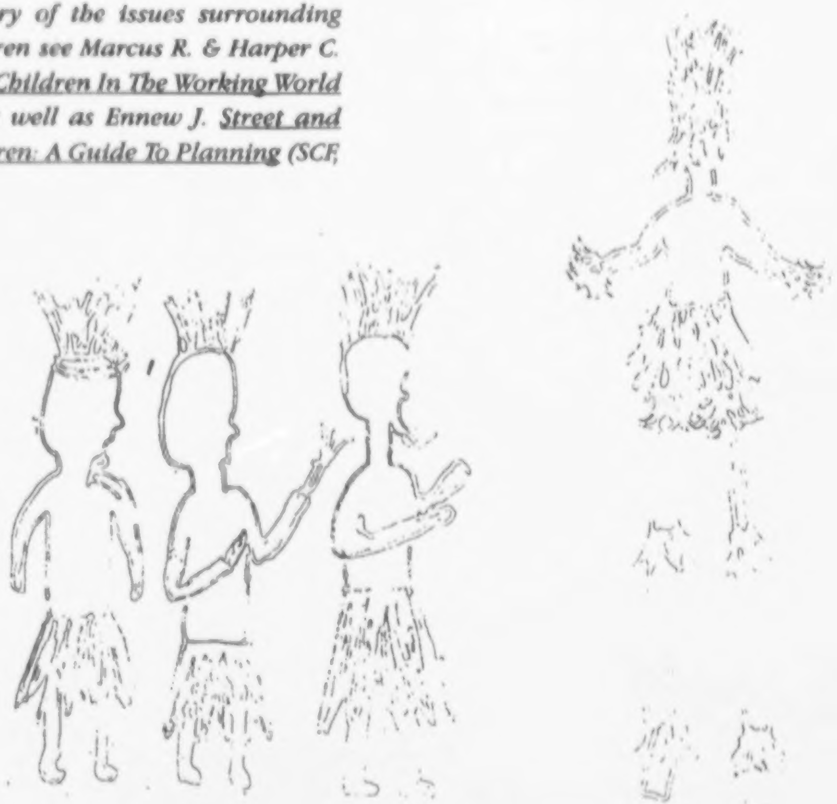
*Judith Ennew and Brian Milne The next Generation: Lives Of Third World Children (ZED Books, 1989)*

*Save The Children, Towards A Children's Agenda: New Challenges For Social Development SCF, 1995 or Implementing Child Rights: What Can The UK Learn From International Experience (SCF, 1998)*

*A more technical exploration of policy and practice is contained in Bob Franklin (ed) The Handbook Of Children's Rights (London, 1995)*

*Other relevant leaflets and papers from SCF include: Involving Children And Young People In Decision Making, Rights and Wrongs, Children's Rights In The UK, The UN Convention On The Rights Of The Child - Training Kit Leaflet.*

*For a summary of the issues surrounding working children see Marcus R. & Harper C. Small Hands: Children In The Working World (SCF, 1996) as well as Ennew J. Street and Working Children: A Guide To Planning (SCF, 1994)*



# APPENDIX 4

## Names and Addresses of Contact Organizations

1. Mashambanzou Trust
Palliative Care Unit
40 Sandown Road
Waterfalls, Harare
Tel: 610079, 610937

2. Martin Luther Church
PO Box CY 29
Causeway, Harare
Tel: 725551

3. Inter-Country People's Aid (IPA)
36 Victoria Drive
Newlands, Harare
Tel: 776304/818

4. Save the Children Fund (UK)
10 Natal Road
Belgravia
Harare
Tel: 708200/793198-9

5. Redd Barna
184 Fife Avenue
Harare
Tel: 721541

6. New Life Ministries
43 Victoria Drive
Newlands
Harare

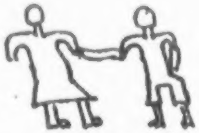
7. Zimbabwe National Family Planning Council (ZNFPC)
Headquarter at Spilhaus Clinic
Harare Hospital
Tel: 620289, 661962-4, 620281-5

8. Mvuramanzi Trust
1 James Lamb Drive
Malborough
Harare
Tel: 301494

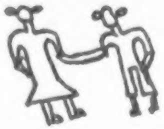
9. ZIMRIGHTS
Cnr Baines & 4th Street
Albeston Court
Harare
Tel: 707278, 705898

10. UNICEF
6 Fairbridge Avenue
Belgravia
Tel: 721692, 730093/4, 731840, 730941/2

## AIDS



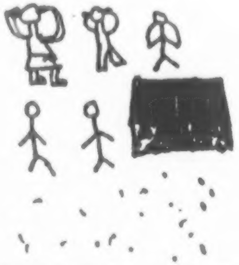
She is in Love with somebody's husband



she also has onother boyfriend

She is now sick from AIDS

She is now seriously ill with AIDS



Here people are now Crying. The girl has died.

My name is Chipo Dembure
I am in Grade Seven
Aged 13 years old

# SAVE THE CHILDREN (UK)

SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND (UK) was founded in 1919 by Eglantyne Jebb who had a vision for putting children first, regardless of nationality, race or creed. In 1924 the Declaration of Children's Rights, which she had drafted a year earlier, was adopted by the League of Nations. This charter has been the foundation of SAVE THE CHILDREN's beliefs and actions ever since. In 1989 it became enshrined in international law as the cornerstone of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Over the past 75 years SAVE THE CHILDREN (UK) has developed into the United Kingdom's leading international children's charity. The organization relies for its income on donations from several sources including legacies, and fundraising. It also receives contributions for particular projects from the UK government, the European Union and the United Nations. Save the Children (UK) is a part of the SAVE THE CHILDREN ALLIANCE, an association of independent national member organizations from around the world.

## THE AIMS OF SAVE THE CHILDREN (UK)

SAVE THE CHILDREN (UK) aims:

- to develop a programme of practical action to place children's rights, needs, interests and views at the centre of development across the world.
- to combat the damage caused by policies and actions which threaten their survival and development.
- to respond to the situation of children in emergencies in ways that put their immediate needs in the context of their longer term interests and development.
- to encourage recognition of children's active contribution to the ties and societies in which they live.
- to support families and communities in caring for and protecting children, and in arguing for this role to be backed by government and society through investment and legislative change.
- to work alongside policy makers, practitioners and others to explore ways in which their decisions and actions can do more to realize children's rights and bring long-term benefits for children.

## SCF IN ZIMBABWE

SCF (UK) has been involved in developmental initiatives in Zimbabwe since Independence, working mainly with marginalized groups. SCF, with its particular concern for mother and child care, supported government's drive to restore health services to the communal areas, following their disruption by the war. From this involvement in primary health care grew a broad based community health programme which continued through the 1980's.

SCF also became involved in work in the Zambezi Valley and supported a mixture of mother and child care projects, pre-schools, womens' clubs, nutrition groups and income-generating projects. This experience inspired and informed developments on the commercial farms, and the Farm Health

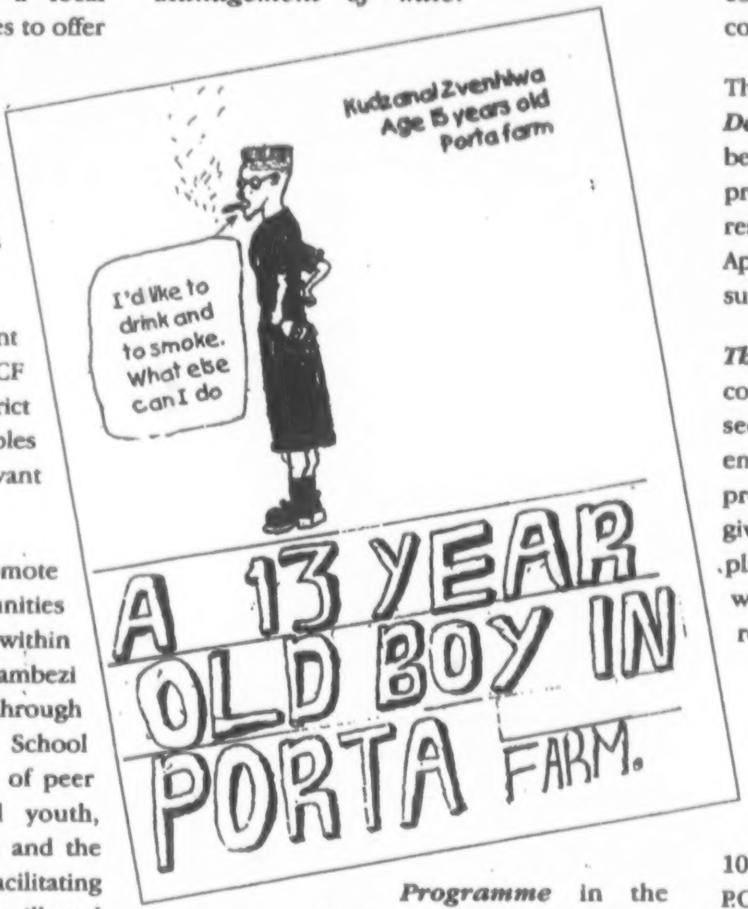
Worker Programme grew to become one of the largest programmes in Zimbabwe. This has now been handed on to a local organization, although SCF continues to offer technical and financial support.

## CURRENT ACTIVITIES

SCF's work in Zimbabwe responds to and supports Zimbabwean initiatives for Zimbabwean development.

***Child Rights*** is an integral component of all SCF (UK)'s programmes. SCF advocates at national, provincial, district and community levels for the principles of the CRC, and other relevant instruments, to be adhered to.

***SCF's HIV/AIDS programmes*** promote behavioural change among communities affected by the spread of HIV/AIDS within the commercial farms and in the Zambezi Valley. Outreach programmes work through Traditional Healers and Midwives, School Health Masters and various groups of peer educators targeting out-of-school youth, fishermen, commercial sex workers and the community at large. SCF is also facilitating home-based care for the terminally ill and orphaned children.


Kudzanai Zvenhiwa
Age 15 years old
Porta farm
I'd like to drink and to smoke. What else can I do
A 13 YEAR OLD BOY IN PORTA FARM.

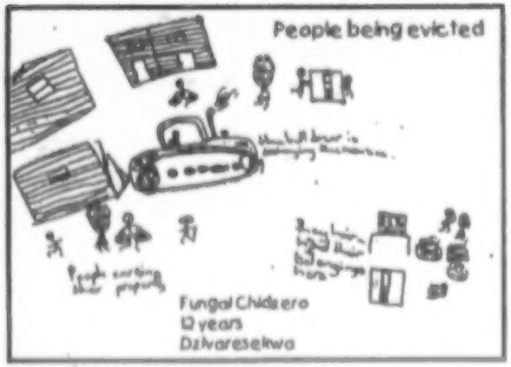
SCF in partnership with local Rural District Councils, facilitates a ***Community Based Management of Water Programme*** in the Zambezi Valley, including the building of small/medium-scale dams and micro-irrigation schemes in response to periodic drought. More recently SCF (UK) has supported the establishment of a private company which has taken over the construction side of the programme.

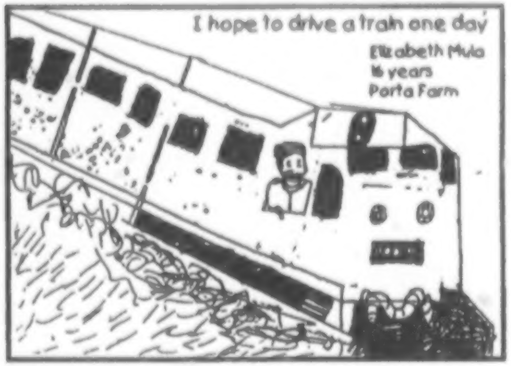
The ***Zambezi Valley Community Development Programme*** aims to facilitate better targeting and implementation of SCF programmes for children in this region. A research team, using Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques, undertakes baseline surveys, feasibility studies and evaluations.

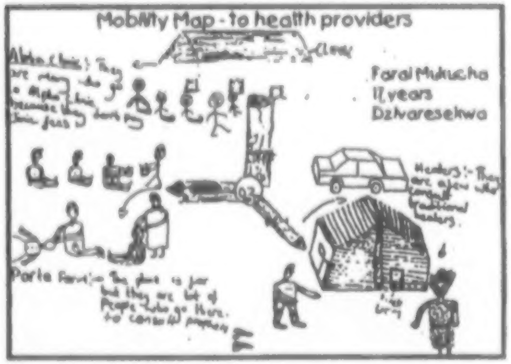
***The Riskmap Programme*** can assess a community's vulnerability to household food security in the face of drought or other environmental hazards. The data is used to predict the proportion of households in a given area likely to face a food deficit, and to plan mitigation strategies. SCF's Riskmap staff work both in rural Zimbabwe and the SADC region to promote the methodology.

For more information about SCF and our activities mentioned above, please contact.

Save The Children Fund (UK)
10 Natal Road, Belgravia
P.O. Box 4689, Harare
Zimbabwe
Tel: 793198-9/708200
Fax: 727508


People being evicted
Fungai Chidzero
12 years
Dzivaresekwa

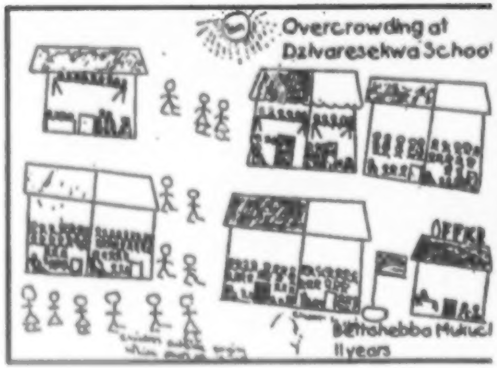

I hope to drive a train one day
Elizabeth Mula
16 years
Porta Farm


Mobility Map - to health providers
Farai Mukucha
17 years
Dzivaresekwa

The word "squatter" generally conjures up an image of large numbers of people living in poor and squalid conditions. The term is associated with illegality – the fact that people who should be living elsewhere have occupied land that does not belong to them. Like all labels, the term serves to place in a convenient category people we would rather forget. One of the main grievances raised by children living in these types of settlements is the name used to describe them.

What lies behind this label? What do children in these communities face in their daily lives? Where do they come from? What are their hopes and aspirations for the future? In order to explore these issues, Save the Children (UK), in collaboration with Inter-Country People's Aid, supported a research project by children from informal settlements in Harare. Over a six month period 25 researchers, between the ages of 12 and 15, carried out an extensive programme of investigation among their peers. Using drawings, quotes, case studies and photographs, this book is the outcome of their research.

"Do Not Look Down On Us" is aimed at policy-makers and planners in both government and Non-Governmental Organizations involved in developing programmes for children from marginalized communities. It should also appeal to practitioners in education, health, social welfare, juvenile justice, the environment, etc., who need to hear what children themselves have to say about relevant and useful interventions. But over and above this professional readership it is hoped that this book will also be of relevance to a wider audience, interested in finding out about the lives of children in communities which too often are hidden from view and public attention.


Overcrowding at Dzivaresekwa School
Bethsheba Mukuc
11years

Save the Children

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